Chapter 8
The Post Medieval and Modern History of Ṣan'ā' and the Yemen, ca. 953-1382/1515-1962

The Mamlūks in the Yemen

From remote ages the Red Sea has been an artery of East-West commerce and the rich documentation now coming to light demonstrates that this commerce flourished with ever greater vigour during the Middle Ages. The revenues derived from the Yemeni ports enabled the Rasūlids and their Ṭāhirid successors to maintain the splendour of their rule from the southern capital, Ta'izz—the customs revenue from Aden and lesser ports, amounting to over 2,300,000 dinars per annum, was remitted as treasure (*khizānah*) despatched in four instalments to Ta'izz and escorted with the pomp and ceremony of the *ṭabl-khānah*.[1] In the first decade of the 15th century the Rasūlids estimated to draw from Balad Ṣan'ā', al-Sirr, al-Raḥabah, the regions of Hamdān, Janb, Dhayfān and al-Bawnayn 150,000 dinars and 3,000 dinars worth of raisins; these are the flat upland areas controllable from Ṣan'ā'.[2] On the contrary the Zaydī Imāms of Ṣa'dah and, intermittently, of Ṣan'ā', enjoyed no such sources of revenue mulcted largely from strangers not native to the country. Though the Imāms could call on the valour of the northern tribes for support tribal loyalties were ever inconstant and fickle, while attempts to collect taxes were an ever present cause of friction, often leading to the casting off of Imāmic suzerainty.

Outside the Yemen, in the closing years of the 16th century, had commenced a train of mighty events that were yet to involve not only land-locked Ṣan'ā' in its high mountain plain, but even the tribal areas lying beyond it. During the years AD 1497-9 the Portuguese Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope, struck across the sea to India, and returned to Lisbon. Swift to follow up the first voyage, the Portuguese soon established a maritime commercial empire on the seaboard of the Indian Ocean. By blockading the Islamic lands of the Middle East from the rear as it were, they created a kind of economic crisis in Mamlūk Egypt and other countries including, probably, the Yemen. This in turn precipitated a Muslim reaction and the Mamlūk ruler came to an agreement with the Sultan of Gujerat and other Muslim potentates but including also the Hindu Sāmirī of Calicut to make common cause against the Portuguese who had upset the even tenor of international commerce. The Mamlūk naval expedition to India was however routed by the Portuguese at Diu and a Portuguese naval force probing into the Red Sea in 1513, mounted an attack on Aden but failed to take it.

Mamlūk rulers had followed the traditional Egyptian expansionist policy in moments of power, of extending the Egyptian sphere of influence down the Red Sea. At an earlier period the Fāṭimid dynasty had, by propagandist techniques, acquired adherents in the Yemen even before coming into power in Egypt, and later the headquarters of the Fāṭimī Ṭayyibī Da'wah,[3] usually referred to as Ismā'īlīs, had been transferred there. In later centuries both Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha and Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir were to attempt to take the Yemen by force of arms but their armies found it too tough a nut to crack. The Mamlūks, already controlling the Hijaz and their influence extending almost to Sawākin on the west bank of the Red Sea, seem to have decided it imperative to conquer the Yemen and use it as a base to counter the Portuguese menace.

Mamlūk troops arrived by sea at Kamarān island in 1515. As the last Ṭāhirid Sultan, 'Āmir b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, refused to provision them, they resolved to attack him, being supported herein by the mountain Zaydīs who promised supplies and horses. The Egyptians defeated 'Āmir outside Zabīd and he retired on Ta'izz—the Yemenis for the first time had met with a new weapon, the *bunduq*[4] or arquebus, which was mainly responsible for their losing the battle. The Mamlūks went on to attack Aden but it successfully withstood their bombardment so they retired, leaving behind them a reputation for cruelty and rapacity.

Egyptian forces now turned to Ta'izz which they took, and then al-Maqrānah where 'Āmir's treasure was kept—it was revealed to them by a *faqīh*, a close companion (*samīr*) of his whom they then killed. Chinese porcelain and metal vessels are among items of booty mentioned by the historians.[5] The tribes of the middle region of the Yemen opposed their advance northwards to Ṣan'ā', but were badly defeated.

The Mamlūks—usually called by the historians al-Jarākisah, i.e., Circassians, entered Qā' Ṣan'ā' where they defeated the Ṭāhirid forces. Sultan 'Āmir attempting to flee to the celebrated fortress Dhū Marmar, in Ṭāhirid hands at that time, was

1 See p.44, n.30. Though so far no description of the Yemeni *ṭabl-khānah's* composition is known, it would probably be something along the lines of that of the Mamlūks (cf. Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā, Fahāris*, Cairo, 1972, 406).

2 *Mulakhkhaṣ al-fiṭan*, my transcript, f. 13r. Royal estates of the Rasūlids in Ṣan'ā' and Dhamār produced 750 (dinars).

3 Al-Dā'ī 'l-Muṭlaq, the head of the Da'wah, Yūsuf b. Sulaymān, moved the headquarters of the movement to India in 946/1539. After 999/1589 a group in the Yemen under a local Dā'ī Muṭlaq broke away from the main branch in India. The are called Sulaymānīs after their first schismatic Dā'ī, Sulaymān b. Ḥasan and the Indian branch is known as Dāwūdīs.

4 For a naive description of the *bunduq* see *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Akwa', II, 226.

5 L. O. Schuman, *Political history of the Yemen at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, Gröningen, 1962, 86.

captured near Jabal Nuqum and his head struck off. The Mamlūks then advanced on the city with the heads of 'Āmir and his brother impaled on their spears, and its governor, al-Ba'dānī, in fear, asked them for safeguard (*amān*)—which they granted and he opened the gates to them. Yet this in no way saved it, for they killed some 500 or 1,500 of its defenders and troops and exacted crushing levies from the merchants (*tujjār*)[6] as they had done at Zabīd and other towns—for instance the little Bandar al-Buq'ah of Zabīd had been forced to pay the large sum of 10,000 *Ashrafis*; its revenue at the beginning of the 9th/15th century under Rasūlid rule had been 50,000 dinars. The Mamlūks are said to have made the Ṣan'ānīs carry wine-jars (*dinān*) for them from al-Sā'ilah to the Qaṣr—which for the Muslim porters of the city would probably be a humiliation. This would indicate that the Jews who made the wine were established near al-Sā'ilah at the time. Nor did al-Ba'dānī's surrender preserve his own life and fortune, for when they later decided to leave Ṣan'ā' they strangled him. The chronicler compares them to the Tatars at the sack of 'Abbāsid Baghdad!

The Zaydī Imām, Sharaf al-Dīn, took up his position near the fortress of Thulā which was still held by a Ṭāhirid governor. This alarmed the Mamlūks so they proposed to him that they leave him in peace there and he should not molest them in Ṣan'ā'. The Imām, now thoroughly awake to the treachery and cruelty of the Mamlūks, and the governor of Thulā, refused, and they set to fighting.

The Ottomans, Mamlūks and Zaydīs

At this juncture now befell that decisive turn in affairs that was to affect the history of the Arabic-speaking countries for four centuries to come. The Ottoman Sultan of Turkey, Salīm I, defeated the Mamlūks in the year 1517 and went on to conquer Egypt. The Hijaz was proclaimed part of the Ottoman Empire and such Mamlūks as escaped the vengeance of the local people at Jeddah fled to join the Egyptian garrisons in Zabīd and Ta'izz.

At Ṣan'ā' the Mamlūk commander delivered the address from the *minbar* of the Jāmi' Mosque in the name of the Ottoman Sultan, thereby admitting his overlordship. He then departed, leaving behind a small garrison bottled up in the Qaṣr under siege by the Ṣan'ānīs. These latter sent to the Imām al-Mutawakkil Yaḥyā Sharaf al-Dīn, inviting him to enter Ṣan'ā'—which he did late in 923/1517. The Mamlūk garrison after much intrigue was permitted to leave for 'Amrān north of Ṣan'ā', the Imām playing an honourable part in restraining the townsfolk from breaking the agreement and attacking the retreating Mamlūks from whom they had suffered so much.

Once he had taken up residence in Ṣan'ā', the Imām pursued his wars with the Ṭāhirids now that their power had been broken by the Mamlūks and he commenced to build up a Zaydī state on the ruins of the Ṭāhirid sultanate. The Zaydīs took Ta'izz and its citadel al-Qāhirah in 941/1534-5. Khanfar, Lahej and Abyan fell to them and in 942/1535-6 the Imām ordered Aden to be besieged, its ruler being one of the last Ṭāhirids, 'Āmir b. Dāwūd. In 944/1537-8 the Imām turned to campaign against the Bāṭinīs or Ṭayyibī-Fāṭimīs of Ḥarāz, a district also containing Shāfi'ī and Zaydī elements. A number of Bāṭinī books, regarded by Zaydīs and Shāfi'īs as heretical, were taken—once small volume was said to contain a declaration that the marriage of persons within the forbidden degrees (*nikāḥ al-maḥārim*) prohibited by God is lawful.[7]

Periodic plagues and famines are described by the chroniclers throughout Yemeni history, and though these cannot be treated and analysed in detail as they should be, in this short survey, statistics of deaths in the plague of 933/1527 at Ṣan'ā' show how severely the population could be affected. From the first day of Sha'bān (May) over one hundred corpses were removed daily from the city to Khuzaymah cemetery—this rising to 1,700 on the last day of Ramaḍān, and on the two days of the Feast following it. The gates of the city were closed and herbage grew in the streets. Some of the dead were left unburied for lack of gravediggers. Assuming these figures are not grossly exaggerated they indicate a mortality of over 11,000 souls.

The Arrival of the Ottomans

Zaydī progress in establishing control by the Imāmate over south western Arabia was now to be brought to an abrupt check. As long ago as 1525 a report, probably written by the commander of the Ottoman fleet in the Red Sea at that time, Salmān Ra'īs, was made, presumably, to the governor of Egypt, concerning the Red Sea and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.[8] The author of the report indicates the potential Portuguese danger to the Ottomans, and points out the extent to which they were capturing the trade in spices and other goods, as well as trying to cut off the trade between the Red Sea ports and the Indian coast. 'The province of Yemen', he says, 'is more flourishing than the province of Egypt, and it has no ruler. Its revenue is abundant. In this province Ḥusayn Bey with five hundred soldiers has been appointed governor (*mutaṣarrif*) of the district (*nāḥiyah*) of Zabīd with the status of a *sanjak*. Zabīd yields per annum a hundred and eighty thousand gold pieces.'[9] Ta'izz is highly spoken of, and the report says Ṣan'ā' (San'ān) has the status of a *sanjak*. The Yemen, he adds, would be easy and possible to conquer. 'Should it be conquered it would be possible to master the lands of India.'

In 945/1538-9 the mighty Ottoman naval expedition, so long in preparation, to contest Portuguese supremacy in the Indian Ocean, commanded by Bāshā Sulaymān al-Ṭawāshī, had at last put to sea—and arrived at Kamarān island. The last of the Ṭāhirids, Dāwūd of Aden, sought support of the Ottomans against Imām Sharaf al-Dīn[10]—to which they agreed—but after Dāwūd had been so injudicious as to allow them to enter Aden, they hung him from the yard-arm of one of their grabs, seized the port and established a garrison there under a Turkish governor.

Sulaymān's expedition achieved nothing against the Portuguese in India and he returned in vengeful mood to the Arabian coast. At Zabīd he matched the treacherous behaviour of the Jarākisah Mamlūks by executing their Amīr of Zabīd, Aḥmad known as al-Nākhūdhah, the Ship's Captain, after he had come to meet him under his safe-conduct. This act he followed up by executing all the remaining Jarākisah in Zabīd. Sulaymān on departing for Jeddah and Istanbul, left instructions with the Ottoman Amīr, Muṣṭafā 'Izzat, whom he had placed in charge at Zabīd, to look for the opportunity to acquire the Imām's territory.

6 *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, II, 232.

7 Al-Qāsim, *Ghāyat al-amānī*, Cairo, 1388, II, 683. If this accusation should have any truth in it, the likelihood would be that it was a local aberration.

8 Michel Lesure, 'Un document ottoman de 1525 sur l'Inde portugaise et les pays de la Mer Rouge', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, Paris, 1976, III, 137-60; Salih Özbaran, 'A Turkish report on the Red Sea and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean (1525)', *Arabian Studies*, Cambridge-London, 1978, IV, 81-88.

9 The *Mulakhkhaṣ* gives a figure several times this for the Zabīd area but perhaps the Report only means the little port of Zabīd, al-Buq'ah.

10 The Sharaf al-Dīn family try to play down this family quarrel which lost them the Imāmate. Cf. Clive Smith, 'Kawkabān: some of its history', *Arabian Studies*, 1982, VI.

The First Ottoman Conquest and Occupation

In pursuance of their expansionist policy the Turks were already besieging Ta'izz by 946/1539-40, and in 951/1544-5 they even attempted to reach Ṣan'ā' via the Wādī Sihām, a route taken by the post (*barīd*) from the Tihāmah to Ṣan'ā', the surprisingly short journey of two days only. These manoeuvres were abortive. What in actual fact made possible, or at least facilitated Ottoman penetration of the Upper Yemen was dissension with the Imāmic House, a disastrous pattern so frequently recurring in Yemeni history.

Imām Sharaf al-Dīn, in the declining years of his long life, grew envious of his son al-Muṭahhar, a valiant warrior who had played a leading role in Zaydī victories over the weakened Ṭāhirids. One of the Imām's sons attempted to imprison Muṭahhar but he retired to the lofty fortress of Thulā and the Imām sent another son of his to attack him there. Muṭahhar retaliated by writing to Uways Bāshā, the Ottoman general in Zabīd, urging him to attack Imāmic territory. At the same time he entered into correspondence with the tribes who, true to character, on perceiving the split between him and his father, at once stopped paying their dues (*ḥuqūq*) but, apprehensive of attack from Muṭahhar, took his brother's side instead.

Uways, far from loath to snatch the opportunity presented to the Ottoman forces, advanced from Zabīd to Ta'izz, taking large cannon with him. This seems to have been the first time cannon were used inside the Yemen and, as can be seen from the illustration from Rumūzī's *Fatḥ-nāmah*,[11] they were to be employed all over the Yemen to reduce its otherwise virtually impregnable fortresses to surrender. Ta'izz nevertheless fell to Uways because the tribal soldiers garrisoning the city, mostly Shāfi'īs, deserted to him and others followed. The *Ghāyat al-amānī*[12] remarks that news of this disaster took only four hours to reach Ṣan'ā', normally a journey of six to eight days. Evidently some system of signals was in operation, possibly a series of beacons.[13] The news threw Ṣan'ā' into a state of fear. Some left the city with their families, but the preacher (*khaṭīb*) of Ṣan'ā', one of the Banū Ḥulayfah *faqīhs*, composed an address in which he quoted what the author of *Tārīkh Ṣan'ā'*[14] states, namely that it is protected (*maḥmiyyah*), and that 'whosever intends evil to it God will throw face downwards on the ground.' 'Perhaps this came from the afore-mentioned *faqīh* by way of setting the people of Ṣan'ā' at ease (about the Ottomans), for otherwise, such mighty calamities, far from unknown to anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with history, have befallen it, and were it only what befell it in the days of Wurdasān and those of the Jarākisah that had been affliction and tribulation enough.'[15]

The new crisis drove the Imām and his son to seek Muṭahhar's aid. Such was their weakness that they acceded to his terms—to hand over to him Ṣan'ā' with forts, weapons and supplies. He now moved into Ṣan'ā' and even struck coins in his own name there. The Turks meanwhile had brought most of the Lower Yemen under their heel and certain Arab quarters were urging them to go on and take the Upper Yemen.

In 954/1547 Uzdimir Pasha advanced on Ṣan'ā'. Earlier Muṭahhar had wished to carry out a spoiling raid on the Turks at Dhamār but was frustrated by family intrigues, so he retired to near-by Wādī Ḍahr from which he would be able to raid on Ṣan'ā' without being bottled up in the city. In it he left 300 arquebusiers (*bunduqānī*), so evidently the Zaydīs could by now dispose of some firearms. Uzdimir camped outside Ṣan'ā'. Muṭahhar's efforts to combat the Ottoman army were repulsed so he retired once more on Thulā. One of his brothers moved to the defensible fort of Kawkabān on the escarpment west of Thulā and another made his headquarters at Dhū Marmar commanding the eastern flank of Ṣan'ā' plain and the route to the Jawf. These three forts with local tribal support could form a defensive line north of Ṣan'ā', and, had the Imāmic House been united, a base from which to harass the Turks.

Uzdimir pressed on with the siege of Ṣan'ā', but it was treachery that let him enter it, for a man of al-Raḥabah (the village north of Ṣan'ā') in charge of the Khandaq of Bāb al-Shu'ūb, the fortified wall set on arches over the northern part of the flood-course, let the Turks in from that side. So, on the seventh day from their arrival outside the city, its citizens woke up to see Turkish flags planted on the wall (*dāyir*) and spears brandished in front of them. Terror, panic, cries for help were the order of the day. Some 1,200 persons were slain, houses looted, honours ravished. Women were sold publicly in the market, some lost their reason, others killed themselves. A number of notables perished in the confusion. At the beginning of the day a grandson of the Imām took what troops he had to the Sā'ilah to fight the Turks, but was almost immediately routed and retired to the Qaṣr—which he swiftly left through Bāb al-Sitrān, the Turks distracted by the sack of the city, paying him no heed. Once established inside Ṣan'ā', Uzdimir issued orders to sheath the swords and end the looting.

Squabbles within the Imāmic House continued to weaken it severely in face of the Turks. Furthermore, on their eastern flank, the Ḥamzī Ashrāf of the Jawf, so often hostile to the Zaydī Imāms, linked up with the Turks. Uzdimir waged war with the Zaydī princes, mostly against Muṭahhar, employing his cannon against the mountain-top castles[16] towering above his troops. During the periodic truces Muṭahhar had the further problem of suppressing troubles in the territory he controlled. Yet Turkish brutality and treachery alienated tribes who might have joined the Ottoman side, for no reliance could be placed on treaties the Ottomans contracted but immediately broke when they saw the moment opportune.

Uzdimir took up residence in Ṣan'ā' as capital of the Ottoman Yemen. In 961/1554 he was replaced, but left as his memorial the *qubbah* near Bāb al-Shu'ūb to which he assigned a generous *waqf*. A few years later, in 965/1557-8, another generous benefactor to San'ā' died, the Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā, who built al-Azhar Mosque and extended al-Ajdham—to which, as to other buildings, he assigned extensive *wuqūfāt*. He also constructed fine buildings around which he laid out gardens in al-Jirāf and al-Rawḍah.

Arrangements for the Qaṣr of Ṣan'ā' are noted briefly by al-Nahrawālī[17] round about the year 977/1569. The Governor-General (*Biklarbikiyyah/Beylerbeyi*) resides in it, for it is extremely strong and because of its impregnability it has in it an armoury (*bayt al-silāḥ*) and powder (*bārūd*) magazine. At the side of it is a prison in which criminals are confined. When the Wazīr (Sinān Pasha) came to take Ṣan'ā' he appointed a constable (*dizdār*) in this castle in command of about seventy soldiers whose duty was to guard this castle with all the stores (*khazā'in*) of weapons, powder and prisoners it contained. He made governor over them an *āghā* called Khiḍr Bey, but he found it irksome to live in the Qaṣr because it was the residence of the Governor-General, so he resided outside the Qaṣr. So the Qaṣr became administered like a fortress (*qal'ah*), with an *āghā* constable (*dizdār*) of the garrison, and a *kedkhudā*, according to the custom of fortresses,

11 Plate 101. See Fehmi Edhem and I Stchoukine, *Les manuscrits orientaux illustre's de la bibliotèque de l'Universite de Stamboul*, Paris, 1933, 11.
12 Op. cit., II, 695.
13 Beacons have been used till at least very recently in the Yemen to communicate news. See Zabārah, *A'immat al-Yaman*, Ta'izz, 1372 H, (2), II, 134.
14 Cf. p.40a.
15 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, II, 694.
16 Rumūzī has several pictures of fighting at Kawkabān when later it was held against Sinān. The Yemenis are shown as dark and the Turks as light coloured. The Yemenis are generally shown as wearing green, but in point of fact probably wore indigo-dyed clothing.
17 *Al-Barq al-Yamānī fi'l-fatḥ al-'Uthmānī*, ed. Ḥamad al-Jāsir, al-Riyāḍ, 1387/1967, 389.

but the *āghā* (Khiḍr) and the rest of the soldiers lived outside the town (*balad*). This Khiḍr treated the townsfolk unjustly and oppressively so they complained to the Wazīr and he dismissed him, appointing as governor over them Yaḥyā Jāwūsh of the Jāwūshiyyah of the Sublime Porte (al-Bāb al-'Ālī). Ṣan'ā' wall itself had at this time towers (*abrāj*)[18] as of course one would expect, and the Turkish Dīwān or Government Offices, was located there.

A measure which would have had its effect on commerce in the Yemen was taken by the governor Maḥmūd Bāshā as a first action when he came into office in 967/1560—he is described as a great blood-shedder. He executed the *faqīh* 'Abd al-Malik al-Yamanī, the Amīr of the Mint (*Dār al-Ḍarb*)—all of whose property he sequestrated—and along with him the *kaykhiyā* Kaywān, both of whom had adulterated the coinage (*sikkah*) with copper.

The First Zaydī Attempt to Liberate the Yemen from the Ottomans

Some twenty years after the sack of Ṣan'ā', by 974/1566, Muṭahhar had regained enough power to advance on the city during the absence of the Turkish Governor in Istanbul. His nephew, at the same time, entered al-Ḥaymah and Banū Maṭar, Ḥarāz having been taken from the Turks. The Ismā'īlīs of Ḥamdān, though inveterate foes of the Zaydīs, had been alienated by Turkish harshness. Al-Nahrawālī[19] provides an interesting if violently hostile account of Muṭahhar's propaganda to the Yemeni tribes in asking for their support, accusing him of telling the tribes that he had received commands in dreams from the Prophet and advice to relieve the *ra'āyā* cultivators of the *kharāj*-tax for three years, that he should not punish them for past lapses but pardon them for 'following others than yourself in the past'. The Prophet has promised him a sign 'to my people (*ummatī*)' that there would be an eclipse of the moon on Shawwāl 14 which, as al-Nahrawālī points out, Muṭahhar would be able to predict from the almanacs (*taqāwīm*)!

In Ṣan'ā', when he commenced to lay siege to it, were sixteen Turkish Amīrs, some of whom were clearly Yemenis—they included the Ismā'īlī Dā'ī and his son. Muṭahhar's success in repulsing a relieving column from the south brought out the tribes against the Turks, and the Governor, Murād Bāshā, was slain in flight from Dhamār where he had abandoned his stores and possessions. The Ṣan'ā' garrison now surrendered to Muṭahhar, camped at 'Aṣir village to the west—about 600 Ottoman horse and 2,000 infantry etc.—whom, in contra-distinction to Turkish cruelty, he treated well. Muṭahhar entered Ṣan'ā', going first to al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, his sons then taking over the Qaṣr. He now put his own representatives into many districts of the Yemen to collect taxes and he despatched an Amīr to Aden. Zaydī forces attacked Zabīd, but in the flat Tihāmah they were no match for the Turks and were routed.

The Amīrs in the Ottoman service still in Ṣan'ā' opened a secret correspondence with the new Turkish governor at Zabīd, urging him to march on Ṣan'ā'. This Muṭahhar intercepted and taxed them with breaking their pact with him, punishing them by seizing their property.

Istanbul was now obviously disturbed at events in the Yemen for a *mühimme* dated 975/1567-8 records that the Beylerbeyi of the Yemen was ordered not to plunder Arab property, nor to oppress the people but to overcome 'the rebellious Shaykh Muṭahhar'.[20] From Egypt were to be taken 2,000 Janissaries, 2,500 arquebuses (*tüfenk*), 7,000 cannon balls (*darbzan yuvalağı*), heavy firing stones (*ağir top güllesi*) and other necessities—to be sent from Suez.[21] Another *hükm*[22] relates that Sinān Pasha, Beylerbeyi of Egypt was appointed Commander-in-Chief (*Serasker*) in the Yemen with 700,000 *akçes* salary (*sâlyâne*) as replacement for Muṣṭafā Pasha.

Sinān took vigorous counter-action against the Zaydīs. Arriving at Zabīd with much treasure and large reinforcements, and bringing up large guns with him, he advanced by the central route on Ṣan'ā' via Ta'izz and Dhamār. Once again Muṭahhar had no option but to withdraw from Ṣan'ā', but he took with him the treasure he had acquired and the guns captured in the forts. He permitted the Ṣan'ānīs to get in touch with Sinān, probably to preserve them from Turkish retaliation, but took into his service about 500 of the notable soldiers (*a'yān al-'askar*) from Ṣan'ā'.

Sinān adopted a more clement policy than that at the earlier Ottoman siege of Ṣan'ā',[23] despatching a rescript (*marsūm*) promising the townsfolk security (*amān*) and, when his troops did enter, he assigned a Shāwush to stop them molesting private houses.

Using his Ismā'īlī allies, he sent the Dā'ī 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad with men to re-take Ḥaymah and Ḥarāz. In person he launched an attack on the line of forts north of Ṣan'ā', principally Kawkabān and Thulā, artillery bombardment playing a large part in operations. At the attack on Muṭahhar's son Luṭf Allāh at Dhū Marmar and Wādi 'l-Sirr the Turkish soldiers were ordered by Ḥasan Bāshā to take men, women, children and infants prisoner but not to kill them, the males to be sent to join the galley slaves (*al-kūrkajiyyah*) of whom the Turks were greatly in need.[24] The Zaydīs now had some guns in their castles and Muṭahhar more treasure at his disposal. Nevertheless it is to be remarked that in local wars the Arabs were still using mangonels (*manjanīq*)[25] as late as 988/1580. Muṭahhar spurred on his supporters to resist by reminding them of the 'looting, slaying, imprisonment, violation of honour (*intihāk al-ḥaram*) that would befall them from the troops of Rūm and Egypt'.[26] In the heavy fighting the Yemenis put up a stout resistance and eventually Sinān was obliged to come to a truce with Muṭahhar at Kawkabān.

Sinān, after he had settled the affairs of the Ottoman troops[27] at Ṣan'ā' and increased their pay-and-rations (*nafaqāt*), made preparations to return to Egypt. He doubled the *kharāj*-tax on

18 Ibid, 391.
19 Ibid, 377.
20 The same *mühimme* or *defter* requires two *beylerbeyliks* of Ṣan'ā' and the Yemen be again united and given to Uzdimir (976-7/1568-9). An earlier *ferman* of 973/1565-6 had ordered the Yemen to be divided into two *beylerbeyliks*—this was the result of an intrigue by a governor, Maḥmūd Bāshā, against his successor Riḍwān Bāshā who was trying to expose Maḥmūd's shortcomings. Maḥmūd managed to persuade the Porte that so large an area as the Yemen could not be properly managed unless divided into two (*al-Barq al-Yamānī*, 159).
21 Salih Özbaran, 'The importance of the Turkish archives for the history of Arabia in the sixteenth century', *First International Symposium on studies in the history of Arabia: sources of the history of Arabia*, University of Riyād, 1977.
22 Ibid. Turkish spellings are retained here.
23 Nevertheless in A. Tietze, 'Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's description of Cairo of 1599', *Öst. Akad. der Wissenschaften, Phil-hist. Klasse, Denkschriften*, 120 Bd. *Forschungen zur islamischen Philologie u. Kulturgeschichte*, Bd. v. Wien, 1975, 75, he is described by a hostile source as 'a revengeful uneducated Albanian'! For further information on Pashas who had served in the Yemen, see ibid, 72.
J. Richard Blackburn, 'The collapse of Ottoman authority in the Yemen, 968/1560-976/1568', *Die Welt des Islams*, Berlin, 1980, XIX, i-iv, 119-76, is an important study but appeared too recently to have been used.
24 *Al-Barq al-Yamānī*, 289.
25 A Rasūlid account (about two pages) of the *manjanīq* and its construction is now at my disposal.
26 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, II, 740.
27 *Al-Barq al-Yamānī*, 297, alludes to the use of *Shafālit* (sing. *Shaflūt*), Arabs, composed of all tribes who eat the Sultanic rations (*'alūfah*)—it seems to mean to take the Sultan's pay, and serve the soldiers (*al-'askar*) whether travelling or at home, and perfume (*yarubbūn*) their hair—perhaps he simply means they oil it. The Wazīr set an Amīr over them. These *Shafālit* are noted before Ottoman times, but seem to have been auxiliaries employed by them also.

the Yemen, levied for remission to the Sultan at Istanbul, now standing at 200,000 dinars.

When Muṭahhar died of blood in the urine (*bawl al-dam*), it was a great calamity (*muṣībah*) felt, as the chronicler relates, throughout the whole country. Yet again the divisive tendency of the Yemen served it ill, for each of Muṭahhar's sons stuck to the district which he happened to control. In the ensuing dissensions the Ottomans were able to play politics in the north. They attacked or intrigued with the princes, turning their rivalries to their own advantage, but accepting their *de facto* local authority by granting them recognition as Ottoman officials. By 1000/1591 all turmoil (*fitnah*) in the Yemen had abated—the quiet was to continue some five years.

The Governor regarded as the most just of the Turks during this century was Murād Bāshā (984-88/1576-80) who relieved Ṣan'ā' of many unjust customs (*rusūm*, often meaning taxes) including forced billeting of troops. Nevertheless the two Jesuits brought captive to Ṣan'ā' in 1590, where they were detained for five years, say of it: 'It was a very great city in ancient times but after the Turks had taken it the population declined so that there remained not more than about 2,500 houses, of which 500 belonged to Jews. Within the walls, which are of thick mud with many towers, there are numerous gardens and orchards with many of the fruits there are in Portugal. All are watered from wells, for there is no spring within the city.'[28] The Ottomans left some fine buildings in Ṣan'ā' including al-Murādiyyah, and especially the Bakīriyyah Mosque completed by the Governor Ḥasan Bāshā in 1005/1596-7. They promoted the Ḥanafī rite of Islam in the city and there is recorded the death of the Muftī of the Ḥanafiyyah at Ṣan'ā', an Ahnūmī, originally a Zaydī, who had adopted this rite.

The Imām al-Qāsim the Great Rises against the Ottomans

Al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, known as the Great (al-Kabīr), is justly regarded as the founder of the Zaydī Yemen.[29] As al-Hādī is the heroic personality who brought Zaydism to the Yemen, so al-Qāsim is the first hero of the later Zaydī era. His Odyssey of adventurous wanderings is set forth in its confusing detail in A. S. Tritton's account of the *Rise of the* [Zaydī] *Imāms of Ṣan'ā'*.[30] His career, typical of that of more than one Zaydī Imām, merits tracing in outline.

Al-Qāsim was engaged in teaching at Masjid Dāwūd of Ṣan'ā' when a pupil of his suggested he declare a claim to the Imāmate. In view of the Ottoman domination he at first regarded this as absurd but when the Turks began to show suspicions of him he left for Shibām-Kawkabān and then Bilād al-Sharaf—since his father had supported the redoubtable Muṭahhar it was natural he should seek refuge in what had been Muṭahhar's territory. In 1006/1597-8 he proclaimed publicly summons (*da'wah*) to himself in Ḥajūr district in the north west, with a following of 400 tribesmen. He was further joined by the Ahnūmīs, known for their loyalty to the Zaydī Imāms up to the present time. The Turks responded by the despatch of troops to attack Ahnūm and al-Qāsim had to take refuge in the high defensible table-land of Baraṭ to the east, territory of the powerful Dhū Ḥusayn and Dhū Muḥammad tribes.

Strong action by the Ottoman general Sinān Bāshā al-Kaykhiyā in 1008/1599-60, coupled with cruelties or bribery, overawed the tribes. When he invested al-Qāsim in Sūdah the Imām had to abandon it in haste, carrying only his personal weapons and a Qur'ān, accompanied by a handful of followers with only three firearms between them, to take refuge in faithful Ahnūm. In the confused fighting of the next few years in the north the son of Muṭahhar's brother and rival Shams al-Dīn who generally held some forts on the escarpment of Kawkabān, usually supported the Turks.

By 1013/1604-5, the year in which General Sinān was appointed Ottoman Governor, the Imām was in Baraṭ again. Negotiating through Muṭahhar's nephew Ibn Shams al-Dīn, the Governor tried to induce al-Qāsim to accept the office of fief-holder. When he refused, the Baraṭ tribes in fear of Turkish reprisals, dissolved their agreements with the Imām and he had to leave.

Al-Qāsim was by now almost in despair and contemplated leaving the Yemen altogether, when the Amīr of Ḥajjah, the strong town and fortress in the western mountains that commands several important routes, offered him his support. This proved to be the turn of the tide. To quell the insurgent districts the Turks despatched Yemeni Amīrs attached to their service, but without avail. The Zaydī tribes captured from Ottoman forces such fortified centres as lofty Shahārah and broke out in a general rising. Sinān reacted by ill-treating the hostages or prisoners in his hands, men, women and boys, till some died. Early in 1016/1607, hearing he was to be superseded by a new Governor, Ja'far Pasha, Sinān tried to arrange a truce with the Imām through the intermediary of Ibn Mu'āfā, Lord of Sūdah. After some false starts the Imām did agree with the new Governor, Ja'far, that he should retain the territories he had won independently of Ottoman control, and the Arab hostages (*rahā'in*) were released from Ṣan'ā' prison.

Sinān betook himself to Mocha but died there and is buried beside al-Shādhilī, the saint with whose name coffee is associated, and his successor seized his vast treasure. He had executed some remarkable public works. One of these was the causeway (*Mudarraj*) to Shahārah from Rakham to its West Gate along which I travelled in 1964. In Ṣan'ā' alone he constructed the court (*ṣaḥn*) of the Great Mosque which he paved, and the domed building in the centre of it, as well as restoring the ablution places (*maṭāhir*). The tallest minaret in Ṣan'ā', that of the Imām Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Mosque was also built by him, and the Public Bath Ḥammān al-Maydān. His important *daftar* or *waqf* properties is discussed on p.153a. It was furthermore Sinān who built the fort on top of Jabal Nuqum after destroying Birāsh fort east of it, because the Khawlān tribes used to raid right up to Qā' Ṣan'ā', then take refuge in Nuqum without being noticed by the Birāsh garrison. The Nuqum garrison, when the tribes made for the Qā', would fire arbalests (*zayārīṭ/ziyārāt*) to warn the Ṣan'ānīs.

An evil thing Sinān did, the chronicler tells us, was to change the coin (*sikkah*), entirely abolishing the former currency (*al-ḍarbat al-ūlā*) and establish a new currency. This brought great loss to the people in their trading (*tijārah*) and debts (*duyūn*),[32] the merchants suffering detriment (*taḍarrur*) through it. One of them said, 'It does not benefit those in power to alter the coinage (*sikkah*), nor introduce a decrease (*nuqṣān*) in the measure and weight standards (*al-mikayāl wa-' l-mīzān*) since loss is thereby occasioned to many of the people of the time.'[33] Ottoman Governors were indeed notorious for the amount of debased coinage they issued. It is in 1022/1613 that the *Ghāyat al-amānī*[34] alludes to the *qirsh* for the first time but it was obviously in circulation before that date. A curious titbit of information is that in Sinān's governorship the substance called *mūmiyā* appeared in Jabal Nuqum, not being known there previously; it

28 C. F. Beckingham and R. B. Serjeant, 'A journey by two Jesuits from Dhufār to Ṣan'ā' in 1590', *Georg. Journal*, London, 1950, CXV, 203.
29 Al-Qāsim was descended from a 4th/10th century Imām, al-Manṣūr Yaḥyā (325-66/934-76).
30 Oxford-Madras 1925.
31 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, II, 792.
32 This would mean sums owed to merchants.
33 Ibid, II, 753.
34 Ibid, II, 797.

was dark red in colour and more efficacious (*ablagh*) than that which comes from Egypt.

The chronicler says of Sinān that he spied on the people, keeping his ears open to hear of their hidden affairs, and meted out punishment on the slightest evidence. Rarely could anyone persuade him to turn back once he had decided on anything.

The new Governor, Ja'far Bāshā, took the severe measure in 1016/1607-8 of executing the intendant (*nāẓir*) of *waqfs*, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bawnī because the Ṣan'ānīs had complained of his taking their property for the *waqf*. This item of information is unusual for, although many *waqf* intendants are recorded as acting corruptly, it is because they converted *waqf* revenues to their own use.

Ja'far Bāshā on his recall in 1021/1612-13, went down to Zabīd preparatory to quitting the Yemen, but his successor died en route for Ṣan'ā'. Ja'far then started back to Ṣan'ā', but the Turkish commander there, Chelebi, along with the Arab Amīrs in Ottoman service, decided to fight him and left the city to do so. The north now lay undefended apart from some castle garrisons that soon fell to the tribes who went on to take Ṣa'dah. The Ṣa'dah garrison agreed to evacuate the town under a safe-conduct from the Yemenis. They set out accompanied by the tribal chiefs who had guaranteed their safety but they had not gone far when the tribes fell upon them, slaying and plundering. It is characteristic of the Yemen that the Imām's army, small as it was, attempted to protect them, but was helpless in the face of the large tribal contingents involved. The tribesmen were likely enough motivated in part by their resentment of past Turkish cruelties. To have the surrender conditions honoured the Imām had to send one of his sons whom the tribes would respect and fear. In more than one case the Imām's officers contracted agreements which the tribes then broke, for at the best of times Imāmic authority over the Yemeni tribes has always been uncertain.

Ja'far meanwhile had overcome his opponents under Chelebi and entered Ṣan'ā' by the Khandaq. He despatched a force of 9,000 men to re-take Ṣa'dah. Al-Qāsim now found himself in a situation close to that of the Imām al-Badr about mid-1964, for the Ottomans initiated a pincer movement against his position in the central highlands, despatching a force from the west through Abū 'Arīsh in the Tihāmah plain to attack Jabal Rāziḥ which can also be approached from the Qā' of Ṣa'dah in the east. The Imām's men routed the Tihāmah column, its commander losing his tents, copper, carpets, treasure, clothes and cattle!

A deal of fighting ensued, with much changing of sides by the tribes and treachery by both tribes and Turks. The tribes feared the Turks but were unscrupulous looters of Yemenis or Turks to their own selfish advantage. The Turks suffered some signal defeats in which they lost many prisoners to the Imām whom he distributed among the tribes as agricultural labourers. Yet he still remained unable to capture Ṣa'dah and one of his sons was actually slain there and his head taken to Ṣan'ā'. His power nevertheless continued to grow and his position in the central highlands became firmly established.

At this juncture Ja'far Bāshā, hearing he was to be superseded, came to a truce with the Imām on the basis that al-Qāsim should retain the districts he now held and Yemeni prisoners in Ottoman hands should be sent from Ṣan'ā'—for it was feared that the Imām's son imprisoned there might be sent to Europe. Ja'far departed with the great fortune he had amassed from the estates of Turks deceased during his term of office. The chronicler[35] remarks that the best thing he did was to remove the *kharāj*-tax from lands deserted by their inhabitants; previously a district would be taxed according to former assessments, regardless of whether land had continued under cultivation or not. The new Governor, Muḥammad Bāshā, entered Ṣan'ā' in 1026/1617 and set up in al-Bustān near Bāb al-Sabaḥah.

Ṣa'dah now fell to the Imām and support for him continued to grow, though not without reverses from time to time. An instructive appreciation of the politico-military situation following the truce concluded between the Imām and Muḥammad Bāshā in 1028/1619 emerges at a conference to which he summoned the Amīrs and the Āghās.

> 'You know,' (said the Governor), 'how troubles (*fitnah*) have gone on between us and the Imām despite our doubling the number of soldiers, increasing their pay and allowances (*madad*)[36] and extending their role (*madār*) yet they have shown no efficiency to conquer the Imām's territory but remain stationed on the frontiers.' They made a reply to him, the gist of which is, 'There is no good moving against the Imām at this time, nor any result but loss of men, for the Imām and his companions are not now as they used to be in times past. On the contrary, they have become owners of weapons and equipment (*'uddah*) from what they have won from the soldiers of the (Ottoman) Sultanate during this period—beside which the Imām receives from them only what they themselves (are prepared to) concede of the obligatory dues (*al-ḥaqq al-wājib*) and he does not set out to collect (*qabḍ*) any of the rest of the claims (*maṭālib*) for tax. In this way their wish for him has redoubled and they have spent themselves freely in the *jihād* in front of him—whereas in this gang (*'iṣābah*) with you there is not a single man of the redoubtable and courageous Ottoman (Arwām) troops of yore—except a pitiful few. God has placed abundant weal in this land under your domination. (Proper) ordering of it and study of its conditions are matters of the utmost importance of which no intelligent man is unaware.'[37]

Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's[38] description of recruitment in Egypt of soldiers for the Yemen and Ethiopia bears out what the Amīrs told the Governor at Ṣan'ā', which he calls a calamity for the Egyptian Turks (Rūmīler) and the Muslims.

> As soon as the noble order arrives from the capital, in which the recruitment of 300 or 500 soldiers of Turkish origin is decreed, at once the illustrious *beglerbegi* appoints two conspicuous good-for-nothings for this service. One of them becomes the *āghā*, the other one the stewart (*ketkhudā*). He goes to the Sultan Ḥasan Mosque and sits there every day until noon with one or two bags of gold coins. After this has been publicly proclaimed, a countless number of wretches that have never in their life seen five gold pieces together hear of this windfall and sell themselves for five or ten gold pieces. . . . They have their names entered in the register, whatever the circumstances may be. At once they find a cock's feather and stick it on their heads. They even swell with pride, saying 'We have become the Sultan's servants'. All they possess is a short under-vest reaching to the waist and a hatchet. That is also all the baggage that is going to be theirs. When they come to the Yemen they see neither the *beglerbegi* nor the capital. They are distributed to forts out in the wilderness. [There] they live among the *fellāhīn* until their end comes from a rifle [sic] or arrow.

That the Yemenis were now well armed is confirmed by the Pasha's construction of the star-shaped fort on top of Jabal Kibrīt near Dhamār[39] to prevent supplies of sulphur for the manufacture

35 Ibid, II, 806.
36 Ja'far Bāshā had begun to pay Arab troops at the same rate as Turks.
37 Ibid, II, 811-2.
38 Op. cit., 52.

39 Reference is made to Dhamār sulphur by Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Tārīkh al-Mustabṣir*, Leiden, 1951-54, II, 191 and C. Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia*, trans. R. Heron, Edinburgh, 1792, I, 363. Indeed a *mūhimme* of 975/1565-6 states that by that date the Yemen was producing a good quality gunpowder.

of gun-powder reaching Imāmic territory. The open hint that the Ottomans had endangered their position by extortionate taxation doubtless reflects the views of the Arab Amīrs attending the Governor's conference.

Even Ma'āfir of the Lower Yemen had for a time rebelled, so, in view of Ottoman difficulties in so many places, it is hardly surprising that they concluded a treaty on the basis of the *status quo* with the Zaydīs in 1028/1619. This was renewed after al-Qāsim's death in the following year by his son al-Mu'ayyad, destined to play a major part in recovering his country from the Ottomans.

Imām al-Mu'ayyad and the Final Expulsion of the Ottomans

During their brief terms of office Muḥammad Bāshā and his successor like many of their predecessors accumulated vast fortunes. A new Pasha, Ḥaydar, was appointed in 1034/1624 with whom Mu'ayyad, conscious of the fickle loyalties of the tribes and their impatience, even of his own rule, renewed the earlier truce. However, by the close of 1035/1626 he decided to break with the Ottomans. He was joined in a widespread rising by the northern tribes. Victories all over the north brought out ever more tribes against the Turks; they took much booty and rendered the roads unsafe for caravans taking them supplies. Most of the Tihāmah fell to the Zaydīs but the Turks, counter-attacking, managed to hold onto Zabīd.

Meanwhile the Imām's men were besieging Ṣan'ā'. They captured the Jabal Nuqum fort, but since the Turks within the city were still strong, the Yemeni garrison posted on Nuqum were given orders to fire the *zayārīṭ/ziyārāt*[40] twice if they saw Ḥaydar's men make a foray on Ḥaddah, thrice if they raided in al-Rawḍah direction. To the south, Sinḥān tribal district had opted for the Imām—this made the situation the more difficult for the Turks. Ḥaydar asked for a truce so he could leave Ṣan'ā' for the Lower Yemen taking all his effects with him—this the Imām's son refused. To show their teeth the Turks mounted an armed demonstration with a display (*zīnah*) around the city, and their cavalry routed assaults by the Imām's men—but the parade was ineffective and they retired back into Ṣan'ā'. A cavalry sortie to al-Ḥaddah frightened the Zaydī headquarters out of the village into the hills and it moved round the encircling mountains to al-Rawḍah. Zaydī contingents seem to have been unable to cope with mounted troops.

The Dā'ī and Hamdān, sympathetic to the Turks, tried to intervene, but the Zaydīs punished Hamdān and entered the well known Ismā'īlī centre, Ṭaybah, above Wādī Ḍahr. The princes of the Imāmic house were prominent in the fighting. The Imām for his part was busy reducing strongholds in the north most of which were probably held by the Turks' Arab allies—'Amrān with its treasury (*khizānah*) fell into Zaydī hands, and the key fortress of Dhū Marmar was taken in 1037/1627-8. The Lower Yemen was now also falling away from the Ottomans. News arrived that Shāh 'Abbās of Persia was pressing hard upon the Ottomans in Iraq and this diverted the Porte's attention from what was happening in the Yemen. Disaster overtook a reinforcement of 1,500 Turks despatched from Egypt which was lost at sea almost to a man, though a Turkish expedition from Sawākin did land at Mocha and put its walls in order.

As the siege of Ṣan'ā' continued Ḥaydar soon turned to force demands on persons of means and many citizens asked permission to leave the city. As conditions grew severer he rounded on his allies and robbed them. The Imām, seeing his soldiers needed rest, wrote to Ḥaydar in December 1037/1629 proposing a truce with the release of hostages from Ṣan'ā'—this was agreed and extended to Dhu 'l-Qa'dah 1038/1629. Famine in the capital and the tremendous prices paid for grain had been an incentive for people to run the gauntlet with provisions for Ṣan'ā', Hamdān seemingly being the main suppliers. Food was now freely allowed in, but jewels were converted into cash and cannon turned into bronze coins (*dawāris*) to pay for it.

As the truce drew towards its end, Ḥaydar prepared to leave Ṣan'ā' for Zabīd. On Friday, 14 Rajab 1038/9 March 1629 the Imām's son 'Alī[41] met Ḥaydar in al-Bustān and Ḥaydar delivered over to him the keys of the city. The Imām sent a contingent of his own men under 'Alī to protect Ḥaydar's camp as the local people had collected to plunder everything even up to the edge of the camp; another son, Ḥusayn, sent troops to protect Ḥaydar on his journey to the coast via Bāb al-Ahjur and Jabal Tays. His treasure, 10,000 (gold pieces) which he had deposited in the Qaṣr was given by the Imām to his envoy. Mu'ayyad appointed his son Yaḥyā governor (*'āmil*) over Ṣan'ā' liberated from Ottoman rule.

Ta'izz fell to the Zaydīs the same year. The Ottomans remained a potential danger to the Zaydī Imāms in parts of the Tihāmah for a number of years to come, especially in Zabīd and Mocha, but the surrender under agreement to the Zaydīs and occupation of Zabīd, Mocha and Kamarān in 1045/1636 removed the last trace of the first Ottoman occupation.

Turkish Administration during the First Ottoman Occupation

Any account of Turkish administration which does not embody the abundant information contained in the Ottoman archives is by this token defective—Dr. Salih Özbaran[42] has re-emphasized their value and the preliminary outline of data he has provided is so important that some must be quoted here as an indication of what these archives can contribute to the history of Ṣan'ā'.

The Ruüs Defterler (957-1326/1550-1908) that cover parts of both Ottoman occupations, show, *inter alia,* that in the administration of the Beylerbeylik of the Yemen a portion of the revenue was not distributed in the form of *tīmār* (a sort of fief) but collected directly by the Treasury. In the Yemen *eyâlet* or province the salaries (*sâlyâne*) of beylerlbeys, soldiers and other officials came from the annual taxes collected in the provinces—as in fact the document *infra* confirms.

Dr. Özbaran remarks that 'as far as we know, no cadastral survey has survived to the present for sixteenth century Arabia.' Some of the Maliye Defterleri contain accounts of revenues and expenditures of the Imperial Treasury (Hazine-i amire) of the Yemen. Some cover customs duties, regulation of trade and industry or expenditures, i.e. the salaries (*sâlyâne*) of high officials, pay (*mevâcib*, Ar. *mawājib*) of soldiers, etc. One dated 1003/1594-5 has a special character as an *ijmāl* type—it shows various revenues totalling 608,479 *āltūns,* the salaries of the Vezir Hasan Pasha, *defterdar* and *umera* at 92,837 *āltūns,* wages of various officials at 344,916 *āltūns.* Two documents in the Topkapi Palace Archives dated 968/1560 and 983/1575-6 contain accounts of the revenues and expenditure of the Beylerbeylik of the Yemen.

The document in Arabic that follows was found for me by Mademoiselle Nigâr Anafarta[43] of the Topkapu Saray in 1963 along with several others which must await publication mean-

40 *Ziyārāt/ziyyārāt,* apparently a type of arbalest, possibly the same name as *zabārīṭ* of *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā,* 62b, annals for 1077/1666. Perhaps *zabārīṭ,* should be read here.

41 *Ghāyat al-amānī,* II, 830, seems to imply Ṣan'ā' was surrendered to Ḥusayn.

42 See n. 22.

43 In addition to my debt to Mlle. Anafarta I am indebted to Professor Dr. Halil Sabillioglu of the Economics Faculty of Istanbul University who, in spare moments at the Riyāḍ Symposium enlightened me on numerous difficult readings of these documents, and to Dr. Susan Skilliter for her constant willingness to be consulted on difficulties with Turkish.

while. In several places my reading of the text is uncertain but these accounts, rendered from Mocha when Ḥasan Bāshā al-Wazīr (988-1031/1581-1604) was Governor of the Yemen, are so illustrative of the Ottoman rule that it seems appropriate to include them here. Mocha by this time had become the principal supply port of the Turks replacing Aden which they had by mismanagement allowed to fall into a sorry state as a note dated 1000/1591-2 on the fly-leaf of the Istanbul Ms. of Ibn al-Mujāwir's *Tārīkh al-Mustabṣir* informs us. In 990/1582 and the previous year 989/1581 there was much confused fighting in the north. The document provides details on military supplies of lead, cannon-ball, brass/copper and cloth, this last perhaps for the troops, sent up to Ṣan'ā'.

Praise is to God

A Blessed *Daftar*

Containing a list of the expenditures expended on Sultanic affairs (*muhimmāt*)[44] and what pertains to [the expenditure of] the Presence of our lord His Excellency,[45] God aid him with His support, i.e., the Sultanic revenue accruing from Bandar Mocha over a period of eight months, from the new moon of Muḥarram al-Ḥarām at the beginning of the year 990/January 26 1582, until the close of the month of Sha'bān al-Karīm/September 18 of the afore-said year. God, far is He from imperfection, is He who brings success.

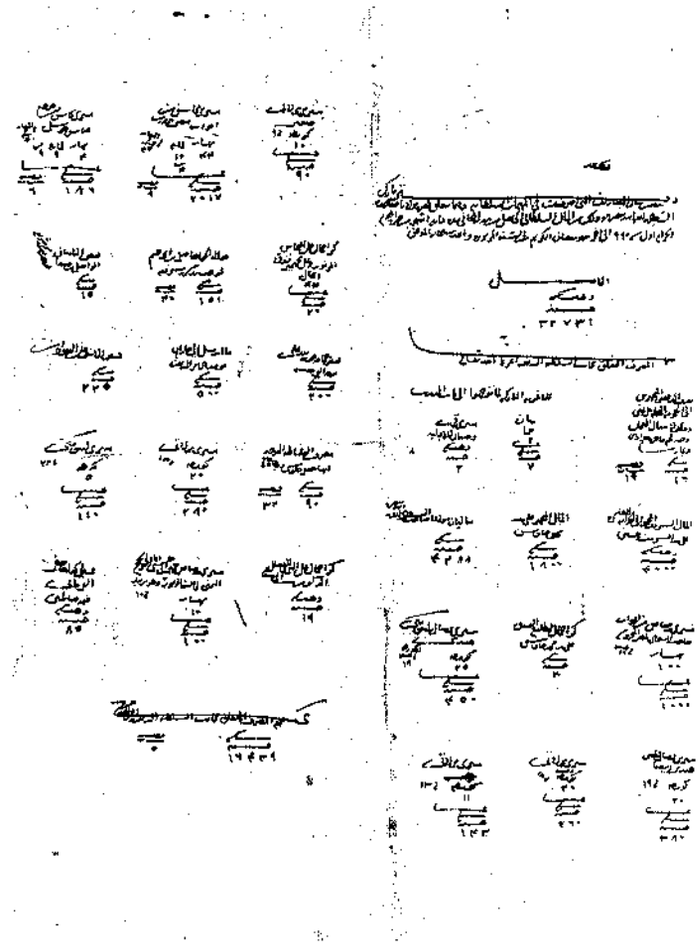
Principal (*al-Aṣl*)
Gold, good coin (*dhahab*,[46] *sikkah ḥasanah*) 32,731

Expenditure on account of the Honourable Sultanate, God Exalted strengthen it

Expenditure on the two cannon (*midfa'*) despatched to al-Ḥujariyyah to the military camp (*maḥaṭṭah*) against 'Ayn,[47] that being on account of the work on the wheeled carriages (*'ajal*), cost of charcoal and wage of blacksmiths and carpenters	good coin 16	silver 19 *pārahs*
The blessed grabs[48] when they set out for Bāb al-Mandab:		
Captain[49]	persons 2	good coin 7
Purchase of yard-pieces and twisted cord for the *jalabah*-dhows (?) .....[50]	gold, good coin 2	
Honourable revenue despatched to the Imperial Treasury (*al-*Khizānat al-'Āmirah) by the hand of the al-Sharīf Ḥusayn ...	gold, good coin 4,000	
Revenue despatched by the hand of Yaḥyā Jāwush[51]	good coin 1,800	
Salary (*sāliyān*) of our lord, His Excellency, God aid him with His support	good coin 4,288	
Purchase of lead from the Aghawāt of His Excellency in Egypt the Preserved.....	*buhārs*[52] 100 good coin 1,000	at good (coin) 10
Hire of camels to send up cannon-ball (*funduq*) by the hand of Muḥammad Jāwush.....	good coin 3	
Purchase of pieces[53] of Mecca Indian *lafif* (cloth ?)[54].....	*kawrajah*[55] 25 good coin 450	*kawrajah* by good coin 18
Purchase of pieces of Indian *lafif* also	*kawrajah* 20 good coin 380	by 19
Purchase of *lātī*[56]—cloth, first lot/ issue (*daf'ah*)	*kawrajah* 20 good coin 260	by 13
Purchase of *lātī*-cloth (second) lot/issue	*kawrajah* 11 good coin 143	by 13
Purchase of *lātī*-cloth, small....	*kawrajah* 10 good coin 90	by 9

44 Turkish *mühimme.*
45 The Governor of the Yemen ?
46 The *ḥarf dhahab aḥmar* or *dhahab* is to be identified with the *ashrafi* (*The Portuguese off the South Arabian coast,* 145).
47 Unidentified and reading not quite certain.
48 The *ghurāb* is a well known type of vessel.
49 *Rubbān,* might also mean 'pilot'.
50 My reading here is conjectural—*qurā* (plur. of *qarya*) a ship's yard, *ḍafār,* possibly 'cord' but dubious, *ajlibah* perhaps a plural of *jalabah,* but so far I have not found this attested.
51 Identified in *al-Barq al-Yamānī,* 389, but other persons mentioned here have not yet been traced.
52 The *buhār* is usually 300 lbs (*The Portuguese,* 151).
53 *Fiṣāl* may be an unattested plural of *faṣlah,* the latter known to Dozy, *Supplément,* but in this and other cases below the reading may be *faṣālah.*
54 *Lafif*—cloth has not been traced.
55 A score.
56 *Lāti* and *dūti* (dhoti) are mentioned on the fly-leaf to the Aya Sofia Ms. of Ibn al-Mujāwir, dated 1005/1596-7. Gazetteers of India show several places called Lat—perhaps this is a cloth made at one of them.

Purchase of brass (*naḥās*)[57] from the afore-mentioned Āghawāt of Egypt	*buhārs farāsilahs* 44	*manns* 12, 4	per the *buhār* good coin 45
	good coin 2017		silver *pārahs* 8
Purchase of brass from Khawjah 'Abbās Jawsaqī[58]			per the *buhār* good coin 40
	buhārs farāsilahs 4	9	*manns* 8
	good coin 186		silver *pārahs* 6
Hire of camels for the afore-mentioned brass and despatching cannon-ball (*funduq*)	loads 44		
	good coin 20		
Draft (*ḥawālah*) of al-Khawājā Ṣafar b. Ibrāhīm according to the honourable certificate/billet[59]	good coin 151		silver *pārahs* 20
Collection (*qabḍ*)[60] of the Bāniyān arriving from Ṣan'ā' according to an honourable certificate/billet	good coin 15		
Collection of the group (*jamā'ah*)[61] of Sa'd 'Alī by way of the loan (*qarḍah*).....	good coin 200		
Sent to Jāzān[62] according to the honourable command	good coin 500		
Collection of the Amīr 'Alī al-Qabūdān[63]	good coin 225		
Expense of the galliot (*qilyāṭah*) in which Ja'far Jāwush set out to the Sublime Porte (Darjāh-i 'Alī)	good coin 90		silver *pārahs* 32
Purchase of *lāṭī*-cloth.....	*kawrajah* 20		by 14
	good coin 280		
Purchase of Mecca *lafīf* (cloth ?)	*kawrajah* 5		by 22
	good coin 110		
Hire of camels for the afore-mentioned cloth and pieces (*fiṣāl*) [of cloth] to Ṣan'ā'	gold (*dhahab*) 19		good coin
Purchase of lead despatched to Ḥusayn Āghā, Commander of the Yemeni Pilgrimage in the afore-mentioned year while he was in Zabīd.....	*buhārs* 10		by 10
	good coin 100		
Collection of al-Khawājā Ṣafar al-Qaramānī,[64] cost of robes (*qafāṭīn*)[65]	gold (*dhahab*) 85		good coin
Total[66] of the expenditure on account of the Honourable Sultanate, God strengthen it by His support	good coin 16,439		silver *pārahs* 5



8.1

57 For *naḥās* = brass, see p.226b.
58 Reading uncertain.
59 *Tadhkirah* seems to mean an official note or chit.
60 It seems to mean that the Bāniyān received the money.
61 Unidentified.
62 Jāzān/Jīzān/Qizān the well-known port just north of the present Sa'udi-Yemeni frontier.
63 The Turkish admiral based on Mocha.
64 Of Qaramān, Cilicia, presumably of Turkish descent at least.
65 The *qaftān* probably means a robe of honour of a type sent to chiefs or notables.
66 I have not been able to make the various entries tally with this total.

The Zaydī Imāmate of the Yemen

For political reasons the traditional tribal society of the northern and eastern Yemen mountains requires the spiritually superior overlord such as the Imām, as indicated on p. 68a. For the Lower Yemen temporal dynasties have been able to rule successfully. In Ḥaḍramawt the power or influence of the Shāfi'ī Sayyids may occasionally have brought them near the position of Imāms but the institution of an Imāmate was never established. The Zaydī Imāms claim authority to rule as descendants of the Prophet through his daughter Fāṭimah. Their descent is through the Imām Zayd b. 'Alī whose school maintains the positive and warlike principle of commanding the right and prohibition of what is wrong (*al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa-'l-nahy 'ani l-munkar*) which is the complete antithesis of the Imāmī Shī'ah principle of *taqiyyah*, religious dissumulation. The fourteen qualifications—*al-ashriṭah al-arba'at-'ashr*—of eligibility for the office of Imām make a formidable list of requirements.

It is the duty of the Muslims by law (*shar'*) to appoint an Imām (*naṣb Imām*) who must be:

Mukallaf, an adult, major,
Dhakar, male,
Ḥurr, free,
'Alawī, a descendant of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,
Fāṭimī, by the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah (*wa-law 'atīq-an*, even if he be the son of a freed slave-woman (*muḥarrarah*)),
Salīm al-ḥawāss, sound in his senses,
Wa-'l-aṭrāf, and ends (hands, legs, etc.),
Mujtahid, qualified to form a legal opinion,
'Adl, just,
Sakhiyy li-waḍ' al-ḥuqūq fi mawāḍi'i-hā, generous in such a way as to place things in the places appropriate to them,
Mudabbir, aktharu ra'yi-hi al-iṣābah, competent (as a ruler), most of his independent judgement hitting the mark,
Miqdām, ḥaythu tajūz al-salāmah, courageous without being fool-hardy.
Lam yataqaddam-hu mujāb, no Imām whose *da'wah* has been already responded to preceding him (*imām ustujība li-da'wati-hī*),
Wa-ṭarīqu-hā al-da'wah, the way of the Imāmate is the *da'wah*, and it is not valid with two Imāms (*wa-lā yaṣiḥḥ imāmayn* (sic)), and he makes his *da'wah* in accordance with what is best (*wa-'idda'ā bi-'llatī hiya aḥsan*).

It is not possible to render *da'wah* in a word or two into English, but for practical purposes it is the proclamation of oneself as the Imām of the age and the summons to the Believers to join one. The above list[67] is what has been laid down by the Hādawī school, i.e. the followers of the first Yemeni Imām, al-Hādī ila 'l-Ḥaqq.

Geo-political and Social Considerations affecting Yemeni History

At this point some rationalisation needs be assayed of the confused aspect of Yemeni history, with an appreciation of the factors which force it into well defined patterns. This history is recorded as an insufferably tedious meaningless to and fro of battles and campaigns often scarcely possible to trace, at least till recently, on inadequate maps,[68] over remote and obscure places inhabited by multifarious tribes with unfamiliar names and unknown affiliations.

One broad pattern easily discerned is the entry of foreign conquerors from the lowlands, their initial success but ultimate inability to conquer the northern highlands, and their eventual retreat. There is a close similarity between the first Ottoman occupation, the second Ottoman occupation over two centuries later, and the Nasserite occupation of 1962-67. Initial success in each case came through possession of superior weapons and organisation. This doubtless accounts also for Ayyūbid victories in the 6th/12th century on which Rex Smith's fine edition of *al-Simṭ al-ghālī* can now be readily consulted.

Local patterns are still less easy to distinguish but foremost is centralisation around a member of the Ahl al-Bayt of government over the tribes, alternating with tribal anarchy when internal weaknesses of the House bring decay of its moral and physical ascendancy, or when its rule is brought down by such external causes as invasion. Purely temporal dynasties like the Rasūlids and Ṭāhirids have flourished in the Lower Yemen, but it is Ṣan'ā', capital of the Upper Yemen that concerns us.

Geographical and population factors naturally affect the course of Yemeni history. While the Tihāmah coastal plains can be dominated from the mountainous spine of the Yemen its ports can be held or attacked by outsiders enjoying sea-power in the Red Sea—with results detrimental to the highlands. The Tihāmah is the spring-board from which the invader can reach the southern capital Ta'izz, fairly accessible from Zabīd and Mocha via the low foothills. Ta'izz is the base for penetrating the quite formidable mountain barriers between it and Ṣan'ā'.[69] Ṣan'ā' is the obvious base in attempting to dominate the north, divided, approximately, by the Ṣan'ā'-Ṣa'dah road into al-Maghrib (the West) and al-Mashriq (the East) provinces. The Ṣan'ā' Plain (Qā') can be held through its fortified villages. Both the Maghrib and the Mashriq, the latter including the steppe land of the Jawf, have always shown themselves highly defensible against intruders. In the Yemen as a whole the struggle for power is concentrated on gaining control by force of arms, but more frequently by political guile, of celebrated forts or castles such as those in Bilād al-Ḥuṣūn, the Country of the Fortresses, or Dhū Marmar, Thulā/Thilā, Kawkabān and others, which control main routes.

The Upper and Lower Yemen adhere to the Zaydı and Shāfi'ī schools of Islam respectively, but this denominational distinction to some extent disguises the real difference between the two. Upper Yemen of the northern mountains and steppes is a congerie of highly warlike tribes. Lower Yemen is largely organised by villages rather than tribes, without the same degree of ardent fighting spirit, though southern tribes like the mountain Yāfi', and the Zarānīq are noted for their toughness—Yāfi' has for centuries provided mercenaries. The Tihāmah, Shāfi'ī in rite, of mixed Arab, African and other non-Arab elements is generally fairly tractable. Zaydī tribesmen are contemptuous of Shāfi'īs.

The Yemen is mostly a land of cultivators living in villages, but though the Shāfi'ī districts can, without too much difficulty, be directly administered from centres like Ta'izz, Zabīd and Hodeidah, the northern tribes, on the contrary, as often as not at war, have usually only an indirect relation with a central government through their own shaykhs. A tribesman, as Aḥmad al-Shāmī says, is first an Arḥabī, a Khawlānī, etc., then, only after that, a supporter of an Imām. Tribes may even support a foreign ruler if there is 'something in it' for them. The chronicles abound in cases of tribes swiftly changing allegiance—there seems to be no reproach for past 'disloyalties', possibly no

67 This list has been provided by Ḥusayn al-'Amrī from al-Wāsi'ī, *al-Azhār*, K. al-Siyar, 178.

68 The situation is now much improved by the production of a British series of maps produced for the Yemen Arab Republic by the Director of Military Survey, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom, 1974, 1:250,000, and the 1975 Photomaps of Hans Steffen and Veikko Jantunen 1:25'000 maps, and U. Geiser and H. Steffen, *Administrative division and land use in the Yemen Arab republic 1:500,000 map*, Berne, 1977, etc.

69 The second Ottoman and Nasserite invasions were however both by way of Hodeidah.

retaliation for them. In my 1964 and 1966 journeys in the highlands I frequently came across such switches of loyalties.

In facing the task of government an Imām must combine the qualities of a courageous and resolute warrior with those of a scholar, diplomat and administrator. He must be an arbiter of upright character, and he must have an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of people, especially of the tribes and families with the intricacies of their relationships. The fourteen qualifications for the Zaydī Imāmate are not mere theory. From personal observation of members of the Imamic House, let it be said that an Imām, or even a prince, must also be an extremely hard worker, rarely able to devote time to relaxation—and he has constantly to be on the outlook for intrigues of one sort or another, against himself.

The House of al-Qāsim the Great has produced some outstanding men who worked to the Yemen's advantage, despite having to act through officials rarely, to a greater or lesser degree, not corrupt, and to rely on military contingents furnished by tribes whose loyalty may be described as permanently inconstant. There are a few exceptions. The soldiery themselves, as the writer has personally observed, are difficult to control, and largely inspired by hope of a subsidy from the Imām, or failing that, extortion and plunder, often of their fellow-citizens. To keep his tribal soldiery happy an Imām must be able to pay them, sometimes to bribe them handsomely, so he cannot slacken in his efforts to raise money—the situation has been well summed up by al-Mutawakkil Ismā'īl.[70] An Imām is indeed aided by the tribesman's extraordinary credulity in his supernatural powers which include the ability to slay by a curse or other such means. Yet, on occasion, I have heard tribesmen speak out in harshest frankness to princes of the revered House of the Prophet.

It is a misfortune when a strong Imām is followed by a weak one. Sometimes there are several claimants from the House itself to the Imāmate—often the deceased Imām's sons. A scrutiny of Zaydī history reveals that, notwithstanding the theoretical principle that any holder with the appropriate qualifications may be elected to the office, it is most frequently a son who succeeds his father. Each pretender has a following from some tribal group he has cossetted—anyway it is not in tribal sectional interests to have a strong centralised government that will 'clip their nails' and make them pay taxes. So brother fights brother, nephew fights uncle, order and security vanish, and the unarmed of the craftsmen and farmers suffer.

There is no Imām who has not had to quell tribal lawlessness—often using one tribe to plunder another by way of reward. Occasionally some extravagant heretic finds himself a following—like the notorious al-Maḥaṭwarī, the 'Magician'. The histories reveal how interested even learned Yemenis are in magic in all its forms—the Jinn, familiar spirits, necromancy etcetera, as among the prisoners of al-Ḥajjah in 1948. Pretenders to the Imāmate have arisen from other Sayyid houses than that of al-Qāsim, and even a sort of caretaker Imām, known technically as *muḥtasib*, may co-exist with the Imām of the day.

For the next three and more centuries the Zaydī Imāmate veers between centralisation under strong Imāms and anarchic disorder under weak successors.

In the following account of the Imāms attention is paid only to notable reigns with emphasis on the social history of Ṣan'ā' and on plain narrative rather than critical assessment. Printed histories are mostly uncritical and brief, Ms. histories, those few used here apart, still remain to be ransacked; most, regrettably, concentrate on wars. Few of the many documents in private hands in the Yemen have been brought to light, but a rich mine of information on social life, economic history, administration etcetera awaits exploration in Zaydī lawbooks, only a few of which have so far been published.

The Zaydīs have a highly developed idiosyncratic religious culture of their own—yet it is still Islamic in the most orthodox sense and Zaydīs can fairly claim to constitute a 'Fifth School' of Islam. During both Ottoman occupations they were offended that the Turks should regard them as heretics—which they felt the more insulting, given the open profligacy, as they saw it, of Turkish personnel in the Yemen. They are far removed from the Imāmī Shī'ah and the Ismā'īlīs (Fāṭimī Ṭayyibīs) with whom they have ever been at the bitterest enmity. As Mu'tazilīs the Zaydīs are fairly liberal, sometimes surprisingly so.

As already indicated the Zaydī-Shāfi'ī rift is one of socio-political difference even if expressed in religious slogans. Al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī revered the Prophet's House and Zaydīs accept the same fundamental tenets and jurists as Shāfi'īs. The accusation has frequently been levied by the more partisan ulema and officials against the Shāfi'īs that they are *nāṣibīs*, i.e., opponents of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, ancestor of Sayyids and Sharīfs, be this justified or not. In Ḥaḍramawt Shāfi'ī Sayyids would be no less disapproving than Zaydīs of anti-Sayyid sentiment.

The strong conviction of the rightness of the Zaydī Imāmate and special privileges enjoyed by members of the Prophet's house by birth has of recent years been shaken to some extent by the secular education to which Zaydī Sayyids have been exposed, as for instance in the case of the young Ḥamīd al-Dīn princes who were at school in Egypt prior to September 1962.

In the period which enters, the Zaydī Imām is carried to power on the flood of tribal assault upon the resented foreign occupier, a flood he unleashed but could barely control. In the creative effort to build up a strong centralised government determined on peace and security, the Imām's main obstacle will be those very tribes with whom he was swept into power. Few Imāms ever came near bringing all the Yemen under their control—al-Mutawakkil Ismā'īl and his immediate successors made a sort of empire, but the two most nearly successful in this were the Ḥamīd al-Dīn Imāms, Yaḥyā and his son Aḥmad.

Historical Background to the 17th, 18th and Early 19th Centuries

The 17th-19th centuries witnessed the long slow decline of the Ottoman Empire (punctuated by occasional bursts of energy) accompanied by European expansion into every quarter of the Indian Ocean and the growth of British ascendancy in India. The Napoleonic wars and French occupation of Egypt impinged a little on the Yemen, but it was far more deeply affected by Muḥammad 'Alī's penetration of Arabia. The British capture of Aden at first seems to have made little impression on the northern Yemen, but the new 'forward' Ottoman policy of the 19th century has left lasting changes.

During the era of Western merchantile and colonial expansion Mocha was the point of contact—it had begun in Ottoman times in the 16th century to supplant Aden as it declined under extortionate Turkish taxation that ruined this once prosperous port. To this day Mocha still has impressive ruins of its former grandeur. European vessels began to put in there in the early 17th century. The East India Company sent the Ascension there in 1609 with a cargo of iron, tin, lead and cloth—the first English caller at Mocha. Its Ottoman Governor made difficulties with the Captain, Sharpie, so his chief factor, John Jourdain, was sent up to Ṣan'ā' to negotiate with Ja'far Pasha. The following year the Company sent Sir Henry Middleton who was treacherously imprisoned by the local Aghā but escaped—he was eventually

70 See p.420b.

summoned by Ja'far to Ṣan'ā'. He comments that the mountainous regions of the Yemen were unsubdued and ruled by Arab chiefs; the Turks were held in great abhorrence on account of their proud and insolent behaviour so that no Turk could travel up and down without a safe-conduct from the chief through whose regions he passed.

By 1616 the Dutch Pieter Van den Broecke arrived at Mocha and opened a rather wavering trade with the Yemen. His compatriot, Job Grijp, in 1628 bought 40 bales of coffee, but the Arab revolt against the Turks made it almost impossible for him to sell his own merchandise. Coffee is not shown in the East India Company's lists until 1660, by which time it had become far the most important of Mocha's exports.[71] It was not until 1709 that the first French vessels under de la Roque visited Mocha, made a commercial treaty and opened a factory. In 1737, offended by the Yemeni practice of paying for the goods they purchased by remitting future customs dues, the French bombarded Mocha port. It is noteworthy that, a little earlier, the Imām had refused a Turkish request that he stop trading with Europe.

Though the coffee trade produced revenue there is scant reference in the Arabic sources consulted to European traders at Mocha or Aden. Zaydī Yemen seems not greatly interested in events beyond its own territory, except possibly in the Hijaz. Sayyid 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Wazīr in his *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā* does indicate that during the latter part of the 11th/17th century, Yemeni circles in Ṣan'ā' were informed on important current events outside the Yemen. Ṣan'ā' of the 17th-18th centuries was remote and difficult of access, but the Yemen was not closed—otherwise it could not have been visited by the worthy Carsten Niebuhr and many other Europeans of lesser fame. From the Ṣan'ā' province and the north there appears to have been little emigration abroad, though northerners sometimes emigrated to Shāfi'ī districts and even turned Shāfi'ī (*tashaffa'ū*)—on the other hand the Ḥadā tribe turned Zaydī during this period. However preoccupied Ṣan'ā' was with internal affairs over these centuries there are many indications, in the histories and the *Qānūn Ṣan'ā'* itself, that merchandise was imported from abroad and was certainly not in economic isolation from the rest of Arabia and countries overseas.

The era was not one of a state of intellectual decline that many other Islamic states witnessed—one has only to recall the names of al-Badr Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī (1099-1182/1688-1768-9) and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (1173-1250/1760-1823)—Yemenis also claim al-Zabīdī, though he actually compiled his major Arabic dictionary, *Tāj al-'arūs,* in Cairo. There was much debate on matters of law and religion, albeit along traditional lines. Belles-lettres flourished and the Yemen would not be an Arab country had it not a great outpouring of verse. Historiography is well represented—al-Jarmūzī's *al-Sīrat al-Mutawakkiliyyah,* so much consulted in this study, is an outstandingly good piece of writing in respect of coverage, selection and presentation of material, not so often matched by Arabic histories of any period.

In the three and a half centuries of the later Zaydī Imāmate few Imāms actually resided in Ṣan'ā'. The *Reconquista* Imāms, al-Qāsim and al-Mu'ayyad, in the first decades of the 11th/17th century had their capital at Shahārah north of Ṣan'ā'—today it is little more than a village located on the peak of a high mountain, fortified and difficult of access, up long steep masonry causeways. Though nearly impregnable as a fortress it is vulnerable to air attack from which it suffered badly after 1962. Politically it would be a well placed centre for communicating with the northern mountain tribes and indeed Imām Aḥmad used it in his campaigns against the Turks. It is the *hijrah* of the Mutawakkil Sayyids. Al-Mutawakkil in whose reign the Imāmate achieved its greatest territorial expansion through conquest, resided in Ḍawrān, a defensible village on a mountain side south of Ṣan'ā', readily accessible from Qā' Jahrān plain, about two days' journey from Ṣan'ā'. His son, al-Mu'ayyad Muḥammad, made his centre at Ma'bar quite near Ḍawrān. Of the other Imāms, al-Mahdī Aḥmad resided at al-Ghirās north east of Ṣan'ā', dominated by Dhū Marmar fort; al-Mahdī Muḥammad is known as Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib because of his headquarters there near Dhamār, and al-Manṣūr was born in Shahārah.

Al-Mutawakkil, born in Ṣan'ā' in 1128/1716, made the city his residence as did all succeeding Imāms until the departure of al-Hādī Ghālib in 1266/1852.[72] In the anarchy and second Ottoman occupation no Imām resided in Ṣan'ā', until Imām Yaḥyā entered it in triumph in 1918. Imām Aḥmad resided at the southern capital, Ta'izz, but as Heir-Apparent Imām al-Badr resided in his mansion, Dār al-Bashā'ir in Bīr al-'Azab where he was paid allegiance on his father's death, until the coup d' etat of September 26th, 1962.

Probably the Imāms chose different places of residence where they could make a strong defensible base in an area where they commanded tribal allegiance.

The Zaydī Imāms (1009-1251/1602-1835)[73]

Al-Mu'ayyad billāh Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim (1009-1054/1602-1644)

The greater part of al-Mu'ayyad's reign was spent fighting the Turks and he is as much the hero of the *Reconquista* as his father al-Qāsim the Great. He had also to deal with recalcitrant Yemeni tribes. Despite his preoccupation with wars and politics he found time, as did all Zaydī Imāms, to write. The *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*[74] remarks that he followed the school of the first Zaydī Imām, al-Hādī, but with certain *ikhtiyārāt* of his own—that is exercise of his own individual preference on points of law. He did not make female relations (*dhawu'l-arḥām*) inherit[75]—this probably means that in tribal areas where resistance to women inheriting land has always been strong he did not try to force *sharī'ah*-law in this issue. It is likely that he could not afford to alienate his tribal supporters by insistence on strict adherence to *sharī'ah.* In his reign also the *ḥākim* of Ṣan'ā', Qāḍī Ibrāhīm al-Saḥūlī,[76] permitted the spending of the *zakāt* on needy Hāshimīs, and even, where advantage lay, to rich Hāshimīs[77]—a measure which Mu'ayyad himself 'preferred', an issue which in following reigns was to give rise to acute controversy.

Mu'ayyad rebuilt the *samsarah* at al-Qubbatayn after it had been destroyed, so the present roofless building there is to be assigned to this date, and he constructed the paved road (*mudarraj*)[78] to Shahārah from the south side.

71 *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā,* 105a, notes the arrival of four English (Inqrīz) and a Khawājā Hindī in 1086/1675.

72 Though he did return to Ṣan'ā' several times later.

73 The dates given for reigns of Imāms are taken from Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *Maṣādir tārīkh al-Yaman,* Cairo, 1974.

74 Of Sayyid 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ilāh al-Wazīr, Chester Beatty ms. 4097, 16a, Arberry notes that it is transcribed from the author's autograph.

75 On actual practice today in this important matter, see Martha Mundy, 'Notes on women's inheritance in Highland Yemen', *Arabian studies,* 1978, V, 161-87.

76 *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā,* 24 a. Al-Saḥūlī died in 1060/1650.

77 The phrase is '*ṣarf al-zakāt ilā fuqarā' Banī Hāshim, wa-li-maṣlaḥah ila 'l-aghniyā'*',not quite the same as al-Mu'ayyad's action in '*ṣarf zakāt al-Hāshimī fi 'l-Hāshimiyyin al-faqīrah*' which was one of his '*mukhtārāt*'.

78 The *mudarraj* on the north side was constructed by the Turks (p.72b). In 1964 I was told the southern causeway was rebuilt or extensively repaired by Imām Yaḥyā.

Al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim (1054-1087/1644-1676)

Al-Mutawakkil's reign of 33 years is the most brilliant era of Zaydī Imāmic rule and marks the furthest extent of their dominion—yet Mutawakkil had to contest with his brothers who declared themselves Imāms, though they ultimately assented to submit to him. Al-Jarmūzī's biography, *al-Sīrat al-Mutawakkiliyyah*[79] has been extensively drawn upon throughout this study. Mutawakkil took the village of Ḍawrān, south of Ṣan'ā', as his capital, but moved round from place to place accompanied by ulema and students (*murīd*), supported from the Treasury, who learned from him.[80] Al-Shawkānī tells us that, in Mutawakkil's day, the country was restored to prosperity, the farmers (*ra'āyā*) had excellent harvests and became wealthy. 'Everyone was secure in what was in his hands, for he knew the Imām's justice would restrain him from meddling with any of his property, while others than the Imām would be restrained by respect for the Imām from venturing on anything unlawful (*ḥarām*), for the people had recent experience of the oppression of the Turks and the wars that had taken place between them over a long period had exhausted them.'

Mutawakkil was much concerned with the affairs of the *ra'āyā*.[81] In his day roads were safe, prices cheap, and nobody could ill-treat (*ẓalama*) another, even if the latter were an infidel (*kāfir*), so merchants came from all countries. He was an enquirer (*baḥḥāth*) and scrutiniser (*munāẓir*)[82] respecting the *shar'*-law, not deviating from its verdict (*ḥukm*). He used to respect scholars (*ahl al-'ilm*).[83] Fortune seems to have smiled on him for in Ṣan'ā' and the neighbouring villages in the year 1058/1648, the underground water (*baḥr*) greatly increased and came nearer the surface so that people were enabled to irrigate their land more easily.[84]

The Dīwān or administration was located in the interior part of the Ṣan'ā' Qaṣr where the Pasha's 'chair' (*kursiyy*) was.[85] There seem to have been Turkish officers in his army and indeed from various sources it is evident that some Turks stayed on in the Yemen.

In 1057/1647 Mutawakkil ordered that pasture-land held as property should be de-restricted (*ibāḥat al-marā'ī min al-amlāk*) and that land-owners should be prevented from restricting it (*taḥajjur-hā*).[86] In the previous year he had commanded that the *zakāt*-tax on pasturing beasts (*sawā'im*) was not to be taken unless the complete legal minimum liable to taxation (*al-niṣāb al-tāmm*) was reached. This order was carried out in some districts but not in others.

Controversies (*muṭāraḥāt*) flared up in 1058/1648 between the Imām and the 'ulema of the age' over such questions as market-taxes/customs (*mukūs*), imposts (*majābī*), *zakawāt* and others, the Imām defending his taxation policy. Among the treatises he composed on legal matters is recorded one on taxation (*Mā yu'khadh min al-jibāyāt*), presumably a counter-blast to the same ulema.[87] Mutawakkil's relatives also queried his monthly demands (*maṭālib*) on Lower Yemen territory. The argument and counter-argument of the ulema and Imām are reported *in extenso* in *al-Sīrat al-Mutawakkiliyyah*[88] but although the theory and practice of Zaydī Imāms and ulema is far from lacking in interest it cannot be examined here. Towards the end of Mutawakkil's life a learned Qāḍī, Aḥmad b. Jābir al-'Ayzarī, ceased attending (*i'tazala*) the Friday Prayer in the Ṣan'ā' Jāmi' Mosque because he had heard of the Imām's attempt to annul his verdicts (*aḥkām*) and his ordering his governors to turn away from his depositions.[89]

A sign of Mutawakkil's growing power was the arrival of an embassy from Abyssinia in 1056/1646-7 with a present of slaves, civet (*zabād*) and weapons of Abyssinia. The 'King of the Christians' who had earlier sent an envoy to Mu'ayyad, now invited the Imām to send him a return mission. This resulted in the famous visit to Abyssinia of al-Ḥaymī.[90]

A further manifestation of the Imām's ambitions or claims to Caliphial functions was his decision in 1058/1648 to appoint an Amīr over the Yemeni pilgrimage (*Ḥājj al-Yaman*) to be escorted by a cavalry detachment (*jarīdah*) and infantry. The pilgrims were accompanied by Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ṣalāḥ of Jīzān[91] and Abū 'Arīsh as an escort. In Mu'ayyad's reign there was no such office as Amīr al-Ḥājj though in the Rasūlid period there had been a Yemeni Ḥājj which on one occasion clashed with the Mamlūks who captured and imprisoned the Rasūlid Sultan who was with it.

The Conquest of Ḥaḍramawt

The Zaydī conquest of Ḥaḍramawt has a special interest as a long range strategic operation over difficult terrain. The Kathīrī Sultan, Badr b. 'Umar had been deposed by his relatives and Mutawakkil took this as a pretext for despatching an expedition (*tajhīz*) against them.[92] Letters were sent to Ḥusayn al-Raṣṣāṣ, 'the first lock (*qufl*)[93] of these cages', controlling the country from Bilād Bani 'l-Arḍ to al-Bayḍā'—next to him was al-Haythamī of Dathīnah, then the 'Awlaqī to the east, then the Wāḥidī; south west of Dathīnah was the Faḍlī.[94]

The Imām's brother assembled about 10,000 foot warriors and 1,000 rein (*'inān*) of cavalry in 1065/1654-5 and in the initial campaign defeated Ṣalāḥ al-Raṣṣāṣī and his allies at Najd al-Salaf.[95] The Raṣṣāṣī fled to al-Bayḍā' and the Zaydīs looted the furniture, goods, weapons, sheep-and-goats of the country.

A campaign was now mounted against Yāfi'. Their leader, Sultan 'Abdullāh b. Harharah, had with the standards of the Shaykh, the Ḥabīb of the famous Bū Bakr b. Sālim Sayyids[96] of Ḥaḍramawt in whom they had great faith (*i'tiqād 'aẓīm*).[97] Notwithstanding, though there was heavy fighting in the steep high Yāfi'ī mountains, the Zaydīs were victorious; they also

79 For this section however *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā* has mainly been used. For the *Sīrah* see *The Portuguese*, 112.
80 Niebuhr, *Travels*, trans. R. Heron, II, 73, says he made caps to earn his livelihood, as is often recorded of Yemeni notables.
81 *Al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, I, 146-9.
82 *Munāẓir* = celui qui examine et décide les questions de théologie et de jurisprudence (Dozy, *Supplément*).
83 Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar*, Cairo, 1284, I, 411. He used to receive *'ilm* from both Shāfi'ī and Zaydī ulema.
84 *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*, 22b. See p.
85 Ibid, 45b. During his reign about 1071/1660-1, 'Imād al-Dawlah Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad, ordered the re-introduction of the band (*nawbah*) which had been left off from the days of the *dawlah* of al-Ḥasan b. al-Manṣūr. Its instruments were made ready 'and its drums (*ṭubūl*) made the hearts of the contumacious quake'.
86 Ibid, loc. cit.
87 *Al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, I, 147.
88 Cf. *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*, 102 a.
89 Ibid, 102 a.
90 This took place in 1057/1647-8. Cf. *Sīrat al-Ḥabashah*, ed. Murād Kāmil, Cairo, 1958, 12. The editor, quoting *Anbā' al-zaman*, says the Imām was eager for a route for merchants (*tujjār*) other than the Turkish *bandars* in the Red Sea.
91 *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*, 101 a, records the death of Aḥmad b. Ṣalāḥ, Ṣāḥib Jīzān, called Amīr Ḥājj al-Yaman, at al-Qunfudah, whose house was in good relations with the Imām. At a later period the Kibsī Sayyids were in charge of a/the Yemen pilgrim caravan. It is to be remarked that in 1078/1668 there was no general security (*amān*) in the Hijaz and that as many as four *maḥāmil* (empty litters sent as a sign of independence with a contingent going on pilgrimage) took the road to Mecca, those from the Yemen, Shām, Maghrib and Iraq. In 1080/1670 *maḥmals* went from Iraq, Shām, Miṣr and the Yemen.
92 The Sultan had made the address (*khuṭbah*) in the name of the Imām in 1064/1653-4. For the Ḥaḍramawt episode see Muḥammad b. Hāshim, *Tārikh al-Dawlat al-Kathīriyyah*, no place or date of publication (1948 ?), 105.
93 *Quft* is often used of a fortress that 'locks' a route.
94 All these are well known tribes of the former Aden Protectorates, even al-Bayḍā' once being regarded as British protected.
95 This is to be identified with Najd al-Aslāf, south of Yarīm, a flat-topped eminence overlooking the main road which I visited with 'Alī al-Ṣabāḥī in 1974, at al-'Īd al-Kabīr—tribesmen were dancing the *bara'* there with daggers.
96 An arms-bearing house of Sayyids with 'spiritual influence' in Yāfi', their centre at 'Īnat in Wādi Ḥaḍramawt. See the writer's *Sayyids of Ḥaḍramawt*, London, 1957, 17. 'Great faith' (*Ṭabaq*, 29 a) is an understatement.
97 *Ṭabaq*, 29 a.

fought the Ibn 'Afīf Sultans and the Nākhibīs, but Ibn Harharah was later allowed to return to his country.[98] The Kathīrī Sultan Badr b. 'Abdullāh, now thoroughly alarmed, released his uncle Badr b. 'Umar and notified the Imām of his obedience and that the Imām's name was being mentioned at the Friday address.[99]

In 1069/1658-9 the Kathīrī, Badr b. 'Umar arrived in the Yemen complaining that his brother had driven him out of Ẓafār, so the Imām decided on the invasion of Ḥaḍramawt, al-Shiḥr and Ẓafār. Ṣafiyy al-Islām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, Mutawakkil's nephew, was chosen as general and, started out by Wādi 'l-Sirr to Khawlān, Q ḥwān and Raghwān where he stayed till the latter half of September when he proceeded to Ma'rib and Bayḥān, staying there at a place called al-Ḥimā, Wāsiṭ and Wādī Ḥajr.[100] His troops suffered great hardship and hunger. Ṣafiyy al-Islām had posted a garrison at coastal Aḥwar of Lower 'Awlaqī territory to ensure that supplies reached him from this direction, but Aḥwarīs refused to hire their animals to transport them and resisted the Zaydīs. About mid-March 1070/1660 the Imām took action by sending money and clothing (*aksiyah*) to the Duhmah of Baraṭ to induce them to raid the edges of Bilād al-Ramal,[101] east of Baraṭ, and the flood courses (*masāqiṭ*) of the Jawf. They did in fact raid the Badū al-Ma'iḍḍah and loot their camels but that was all. By this the Imąm had hoped to arrange supplies for the troops in Ḥaḍramawt, but as the chronicler observes, it was no use on account of the distance. This reveals a certain ignorance of geography on the part of Mutawakkil.

Ṣafiyy in Ḥajr found it difficult to move and his operations were held up at Anṣāb for lack of camels. His army's morale was low so the Imām sent men of al-Ḥaymah to al-Bayḍā' to encourage the army. However Ṣafiyy managed to extricate himself after sending out scouts to reconnoitre the country. He now took the route up the *'aqabah* or pass (perhaps al-Madillāh ?) to al-Khuraybah of the Wādī Daw'an, and Raydat Bā Masdūs, and thence to al-Hajarayn and the Kathīrī Sultan's capital only two days further on. The Sultan retired to Shibām, then to Shanāfir. Ṣafiyy entered Shibām which the chronicler calls 'an eye among the towns of Islam'. The Sultan now 'returned to obedience.'[102]

Omani Maritime Attacks on the Zaydī held Coasts

The conquest of Ḥaḍramawt soon brought the Zaydīs into confrontation with the rising maritime power of Oman.

Ja'far, the Kathīrī, had in 1070/1660 induced the Imām of Oman, Sulṭān b. Sayf,[103] to take Ẓafār—it was however re-taken by Mutawakkil's own Kathīrī protégé. A Zaydī *nā'ib* was appointed to al-Shiḥr. He was replaced in 1079/1668 by a new *nā'ib* sent by Mutawakkil to take over the governorship (*wilāyah*) of Ẓafār of Ḥaḍramawt'. The new *nā'ib* took over al-Shiḥr, sending his son to Ẓafār in his stead.

Since they commanded the sea-power the Omanis could raid the south Arabian coasts as they willed and in 1079/1669, in May, the chronicler records that they came to plunder the coast of Aden and Mocha. The Omanis fell in with three barques (*jilāb*) of the Franks at the very entrance to Mocha port (*bāb al-furḍah*). The Franks defended their property but the *nā'ib* of Mocha was helpless to repel the Omani raiders because of their greatly superior numbers and their seven galliots (*birāsh*)[104]—large vessels. Reinforcements arrived too late to prevent some looting, and so a number of vessels went on to Jeddah. On their return voyage to Muscat, the Omanis plundered the Mahrah coast.

Some years later, in 1084/1673-4 the Socotran Mahrah and the coastal Mahrah west of Ẓafār wrote to the Imām to protect them against the Omani marauders—so presumably the attacks continued. Yet, in the following year, Omani raiders sailed by way of Socotra where they killed some people, their *barshahs* following the Bāniyān[105] to the Gate (Bāb) of Mocha, plundering them and throwing them into the sea. At Ṣīrah Island and Aden the people drove them off with arquebus and zebratana, but the Omanis joined up with the rest of their ships and blockaded Bāb al-Mandab Strait until driven off by Ṣafiyy al-Islām commissioned by the Imām to deal with them. In 1085/1674 the Imām despatched a force, 300 strong, to defend al-Shiḥr from Omani attack from the sea. There was good cause for apprehension, and when news arrived about April of the following year that Omani vessels had put to sea from Muscat with the 'Wind of the East', the Imām and his son suspected their intention was to raid the Yemeni coast.

Insecurity at sea could not but affect the Ṣan'ā' markets importing goods from abroad as when, for instance, in 1073/1662-3 'only a little cloth (*bazz*) entered Mocha *bandar* because of the afore-mentioned trouble from the Frank[106] in the previous year.' A glimpse of how commerce was carried out by vessels plying the trade-route from the Gulf and India is afforded us by Jarmūzī in describing the treatment meted out by the Kathīrī Ja'far b. 'Abdullāh at Ẓafār to people from al-Kunj (Kung)[107] a little north east of Lingeh.

Insecurity on the caravan routes from Ḥaḍramawt via the Jawf to Ṣan'ā' would affect inland trade along the relatively easy route along the steppe bordering Ramlat Saba'tayn. In 1075/1664 for example, the Ma'iḍḍah Badū robbed the Kathīrī Badr b. 'Abdullāh of a present he was bringing Mutawakkil. More serious politically perhaps was the trouble from the country of the 'Awlaqīs and other tribes, each wanting independence for itself (*istiqlāl la-hu bi-nafsi-hi*)—the Arabic has an oddly modern ring!

Foreign Relations

In general the Yemeni chroniclers are well informed on events in India. Mutawakkil was in touch with Aurangzīb. He was brought a gift of horses (*birdhawn*) from India in 1071/1660-1 and next year Ṣafiyy al-Islam, established in Aden, despatched to the 'King of India' a gift of noble Arab horses and horses of the Yemen—a present of double the value came back in return. Again in 1087/1676-7 ships arrived at Mocha *bandar* bearing a present from Sultan Aurangzīb to the Imām and *ṣadaqah* to the Ashrāf of the Yemen.

Relations with the Hijaz were close and the exchange of views in questions of law and religion frequent and continuous. The Yemen was well aware of events in the Ottoman dominions, be they in the Hijaz, Sawākin/Suakin, or even Istanbul, and visits were made from time to time by Turkish diplomats. The Ottoman Sultan in fact decided to attack the Yemen in 1085/1674-5 but the project was abandoned for fear of the Portuguese. The activities of the Portuguese and other Europeans are recorded and in 1074/1663-4 the chronicler notes that the English had plundered Surat. The attack of the Hollanders and English (though probably the latter were not involved, only the pirate Hubert Hugo) on Mocha in 1659-60 has already been translated into English.[108]

98 *Ṭabaq*, 29b.
99 *Ithbāt al-khuṭbah wa-'l-jamā'ah.*
100 Wādī Ḥajr is well known, the chief town being Ṣidārah, but there is a Wādī Ḥijir near Wāsiṭ which might be intended at this point.
101 Ramlat Saba'tayn? *Masāqiṭ* means *majrā suyūl al-Jawf*, the flood-courses of the Jawf.
102 The full account of the operation is in *al-Sīrat al-Mutawakkiliyyah* but only the summary of *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā* has been used.
103 He ruled from 1050-1091/1640-1680.
104 For these types of vessel see the writer's *Portuguese off the south Arabian coast*, index.
105 This must be the Indian trading vessels arriving with the monsoon.
106 The attack by the Hollanders and Hugo.
107 Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, no place of publication, 1332 H, II, 57, in a letter from the Omani Sultan to Imām Ismā'īl of the Yemen, Kunj and Jīrūn are described as the two *bandars* of the Shāh. Kung is described by J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, II B, 1040-05. It was once fairly important. Jīrūn is Hormuz island (Portuguese Gombroon).
108 Cf. *Portuguese*, op. cit., 117.

Mutawakkil and Taxation

There are two aspects to Mutawakkil's fiscal policy—if it can be called a policy—his treatment of the tribes, probably at least the northern and Zaydī tribes, and his taxation of towns, imposts of various types, customs duties, etcetera.

That he did not directly tax certain tribes is evident from a passage in the *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*.[109] The *ḥākim* of Baraṭ, the very learned Qāḍī Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-'Ansī, then al-'Iyānī al-Baraṭī, and his father 'received the dues of their tribes (*wājibāt qabā'ili-him*) by their choosing and being given the choice, and al-Mu'ayyad billāh assigned that to them, except what was surplus to their requirement and they continued in that fashion'. In fact even the great Mutawakkil paid subsidies to tribes as has commonly been done up to the present time. In the following case in point it looks as if the payment was made to ensure the security of routes through tribal territory. In 1086/1675-6, says the chronicler,[110] the Duhmah plundered a caravan of the Ṣa'dah merchants (*tujjār*) at al-'Amashiyyah (some 22 miles south of Ṣa'dah, on the main route from Ṣan'ā'), giving as the reason that the Imām had cut their stipend (*jāmakiyyah*), but saying that if he restored it they would return the booty.

In the opening years of his reign, as already seen, Mutawakkil was criticised by the ulema for levying certain categories of tax illegal in their eyes. In 1074/1663-4 he laid down an impost (*faraḍa majbā*)[111] 'to be collected from the merchants (*ahl al-bay' wa-'l-shirā'*), and the inspector of the *waqf* imposed a fixed sum (*shay' ma'lūm*) on everyone of the butchers.[112] This continued until Rabī' II of year 1077/1666 and through it the people suffered detriment (*taḍarrara*) so the Imām removed it, retaining however the inspector because of his easy treatment of the people.' In 1076/1665, a certain Sayyid Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Ghurbānī had written to the Imām from Baraṭ criticising certain of the ordinances (*aḥkām*).[113] It is not however stated whether this influenced him when he removed that year (the imposts) 'he had laid on the sūqs and only the previously existing imposts (*qabālāt*)[114] remained.'

In 1085/1674-5 the *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā* notes that 'levies (*maṭālib*) upon the Lower Yemen, apart from the *zakāt, fiṭrah* and expiatory fines (? *kaffārāt*)[115] had redoubled, such as the prayer-levy on the person praying (*maṭlab al-ṣalāh 'ala 'l-muṣallī*) etcetera, the tobacco (*ṭunbāq*) levy, the levy on profit (*maṭlab al-rabāḥ), the* lead (shot) and gun-powder levy, the levy for the Governor's table (*maṭlab sufrat al-wālī*) and the levy of the Two Feasts.' Perhaps it was on account of these exactions that the chiefs of al-Ḥujariyyah rose and killed some slaves of 'Izz al-Islām that year.

In his reign the Ṣan'ā' Jews had one of their recurring Messianic phases which landed them in trouble with the administration (cf. p.398b).

At the time of his death Mutawakkil's testament to his sons and relations was to refrain from 'eating the *zakāt*'.[116] This he commended to all other Hāshimīs, advising them to take to trading.

Al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim (1087-1092/1676-1681)

Two short reigns followed Mutawakkil's long and successful tenure of the Imāmate. His nephew Ṣafiyy al-Islām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, the conqueror of Ḥaḍramawt, took office after him, a prince of great experience, in his late fifties. Acknowledgement (*taslīm al-bay'ah*) of allegiance to him came from the Sultan of Ḥaḍramawt accompanied by a present. In his day a Sharīf Nāṣir of Ānis introduced a new tenet (*madhhab*) of his own, prohibiting what is lawful, kissing the hand at greeting (*muṣāfaḥah*)[117] and the taking of coffee (*qahwat al-bunn*) etc. This latter led to the up-rooting of many coffee-bush plantations (*maghāris*).[118] His punishment was merely imprisonment. In 1090/1679 the Imām ordered the Jews to be expelled from Ṣan'ā' and they settled temporarily at Mawza' (cf. p.399b seq.).

Al-Mu'ayyad billāh Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil Ismā'īl (1092-1097/1681-1686)

Al-Mahdī's successor, a son of Mutawakkil, had trouble with other pretenders to the Imāmate. He settled first in Ṣan'ā', then in Ḍawrān. In his brief reign the warlike Yāfi' tribes threw out their Imāmic governor and al-Mu'ayyad was unable to recover suzerainty over their territory.

Al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim (1098-1130/1687-1718)

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, a great grandson of al-Qāsim the Great, took first the name al-Hādī, then al-Mahdī, but is known as Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib because he made his residence at al-Mawāhib about three miles east of Dhamār. When he claimed the Imāmate he was in al-Manṣūrah of al-Ḥujariyyah province. His Āl Qāsim relations besieged him there and he nearly surrendered for lack of water, but God granted him rain so he made a sortie and captured all the Āl Qāsim Amīrs in a tent. He lavished money on armies and all came to pay him allegiance. Zabārah[119] calls him

> one of the great kings who would take money/revenue (*māl*) from (his) subjects (*ra'āyā*) without measure (*taqdīr*) and spend it without measure. After the departure of the Turks until he ruled over it the Yemen was preserved from tyranny (*jawr*),[120] impost-taxes (*jibāyāt*) and taking of what the *shar'*-law does not deem lawful, but when this one rose he took money/revenue lawful and unlawful (*min ḥilli-hi wa-ghayr ḥilli-hi*). He was monarch of a mighty kingdom and had many troops but was ascetic in dress, wearing neither silk nor fine clothes. He was partial to the company of ulema but, though he liked to make a show of being an *'ālim* he was not really one. He was known as Ṣāḥib al-Sijdah[121] because when he came out of the retinue accompanying him, seeing the troops filling the area he would dismount from his steed and prostrate himself in gratitude and humility.

Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib seems to have executed, looted, bestowed or withheld gifts in so arbitrary a fashion that it was popularly said a *mārid* of the Jinn would speak to him by night to kill someone on the following day.[122] He was a man of a waywardness (*ṭaysh*) that no one could give him advice. An odd characteristic of his was that when he wanted to punish one of his *wazīrs* or amīrs he ordered the troops to plunder his property but would take nothing for himself. He was clearly one of the toughest of the Imāms.

109 Op. cit., 44a.
110 Ibid, 106a.
111 Ibid, 50a-b.
112 Written in the ms. *ḥarrārīn*, but *jazzārīn* seems the best reading.
113 Ibid, 103a.
114 Dozy, *Supplément*, seems appropriate here—'plusieurs sortes d'impôts non prescrits par le droit canon, et par conséquent illégaux jusqu'à un certain point.' An unclear passage (*Ṭabaq* 108b) seems to indicate he was attacked over his *aḥkām* on the Lower Yemen, See for *Qabālāt* p.153b.
115 Fines paid to expiate an oath taken in vain, e.g., *Aqsim billāh annī 'amalt kadhā*. In such case the fine goes to the Imām.
116 See p.79b, supra.
117 Kissing the hand of Sayyids has been a disputed issue in Ḥaḍramawt.
118 *Ṭabaq*, 109b.
119 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 455; cf. *al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, II, 98.
120 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 457, cites a poem saying that Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib criticised his predecessors for *ẓulm* and *jawr*—which was true of them, but by comparison with him they are to be accounted just!
121 *Al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, II, 98, *sijdah* means prostration in prayer.
122 In 1098/1686-7 he beheaded a *faqīh* of whom he heard that 'he retained half of the revenues of the people of Ṣan'ā', that he had poisoned Imām al-Mu'ayyad and that he was a skilled astrologer (*munajjim*).' (*Nashr al-'arf*, II, 43).

A strange disturbance that took place in his day was the rising of an ambitious Sayyid, Ibrāhīm al-Maḥaṭwarī[123] of al-Maḥaṭwar, a village of Bilād al-Sharaf in al-Ḥajūr district, he being a descendant of al-Qāsim b. 'Alī al-'Iyānī, a 4th/11th century Imām. He appeared in 1111/1699-1700, his followers being ecstatics (*majādhīb*) a type common enough in the Lower Yemen but unusual in Zaydī districts,[124] and some reached Bandar al-Ṣalabah and Wādī Mawr and beseiged the fortress of Thulā. Al-Maḥaṭwarī had an outstanding reputation for writing out magic squares (*awfāq*) and talismans (*ṭilsamāt/ṭalāsim*) which he would blot out in water and give to cows and bulls to drink and order them to be slaughtered for the people and for birds. He is described as skilled in legerdemain (*sha'wadhah*) and was reckoned a great magician. He had the reputation of being able to preserve his followers from bullets[125] until a woman of Thulā dropped a stone of the merlons on top of one of them and killed him. His fanaticism led him to kill many Jews and Bāniyāns. Army after army was sent against him by the Imām only to be routed and most of the troops slain. Finally the Imām sent his own sons against him and they defeated him. He fled to Ṣa'dah where the local governor cut off his head.[126] At the height of his career al-Maḥaṭwarī claimed to be the Expected Mahdī.

Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib resolved to bring Yāfi' back under Zaydī control and in 1101/1689-90 he despatched an army against it and the Sultan Ibn al-'Afīf, under the leadership of the Kabīr of Hamdān, but after an initial success the force was defeated. Fearing reprisals on him by the Imām the Kabīr returned home and came out in rebellion but was in turn defeated and executed. In 1120/1708 Yāfi', having inflicted a series of reverses on the Imām's troops, attacked Ibb, led by their Sultan 'Umar b. Ṣāliḥ b. Harharah with 20,000 tribesmen not only of Yāfi' but also of al-Raṣṣāṣ, al-Ḥawāshib, Dathīnah, the followers of al-Haythamī, Āl Ḥumayqān,[127] Murād, Bayḥān and al-Muṣ'abayn. The walls of Ibb were weak and the tribesmen took it with their swords and muskets (*banādiq*) slaying men and women, respecting neither Muslims nor Jews, burning and plundering. They took all that was in the Sūq, the Khān of the Bāniyān and the mosques, loading 1,000 camels with it as well as what was carried on donkeys and on their own backs. An Imāmic force sent against them was routed and had to retire on Ibb. Yāfi' was never to be recovered by the Imāms.

Though the Imām had been supreme in the Yemen, in 1126/1714 a rival, al-Mutawakkil b. 'Alī b. al-Qāsim, came out in opposition against him and eventually besieged him al-Mawāhib where he died—to the relief of the besieged and besiegers.

Early in his reign Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib marked out a town, al-Khaḍrā', about a mile from Radā', where houses, castles, sūqs, baths and mosques were built and many crafts, plied by Arabs, Indians and Turks, established. He settled there a while then, because he fell sick in it, he abandoned al-Khaḍrā' and developed al-Mawāhib, a walled town, and al-Khaḍrā' fell into ruin. Another more fruitful venture was his despatch of Ibrāhīm Bāshā in 1107/1695-6 from Mocha to take Zayla' island off the African coast—a large fort was built, a mosque, and town walls. The Imām supplied it with four cannon and it became a *bandar* frequented by merchants, slaves being exported thence to Mocha.

A diplomatic mission from the Shāh of Persia visited Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib in 1113/1701-2, and in the following year a mission from the Pasha of Jeddah—the Imām gave the envoy a fine jewelled dagger the Persian mission had presented to him!

123 His biography is in *Nashr al-'arf*, I, 40 seq. A similar type of revolt is mentioned by al-Shawkānī in 1164/1751 in the days of al-Mahdī 'Abbās.

124 Before Raydah one passes on the right a village of the 'Iyāl Sirayḥ of Bakīl called Banī Zubayr who were *majādhīb* but now not one in a hundred is. They regard it as an insult (*'ayb*) to be called *majdhūb*, and will fight anyone who does so. They have a writing (*raqm*) i.e., a *wathīqah*, be they *majādhīb* or not, that they will pay the *diyah* for a person who is killed after calling them *majādhīb*.

Al-Mu'ayyad billāh al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Qāsim (1121-1124/1709-1712)

Al-Ḥusayn proclaimed himself Imām in 1121/1709 and gained a number of adherents in the Ṣa'dah region, in opposition to the Imām Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib. When, three years later, al-Manṣūr proclaimed himself Imām, al-Ḥusayn 'deposed himself from the *da'wah*' and paid allegiance to al-Manṣūr.

Al-Manṣūr billāh al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim b. al-Mu'ayyad al-Shahārī (1127-1131/1716/1720)

Al-Manṣūr seems to have taken the opportunity offered by the widespread discontent with the abuses of the law and tyranny of Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib to proclaim his *da'wah* or claim to the Imāmate in 1127/1716 in the mountain town of Shahārah. He indited a tract (*risālah*)[128] against Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib mainly of course criticising his exactions contrary to *sharī'ah* law, especially those upon the *ḍa'afah/ḍu'afā'*, the non-arms-bearing groups. The tribes among whom he circulated the tract responded so widely that only some of the Tihāmah, the ports, and that part of the Yemen from Dhamār to the Lower Yemen were left in the hands of Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib. The Imām sent 'Alī al-Aḥmar al-Ḥāshidī to obtain tribal support in his favour, but he soon realised he had no power to rally them to the Imām. The Imām had been advised to release his nephew al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn (p.84a) from prison to fight al-Manṣūr. The Imām's son, it was agreed, should hand over the governorship of Ṣan'ā' to al-Qāsim. Al-Qāsim was however defeated by al-Manṣūr at Sūdah, and, falling out with Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib, he recognised al-Manṣūr as Imām; the latter now gained control of 'Amran, Ḥajjah and other towns. Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib brought in the garrisons from the ports (*banādir*)[129] and he was joined by the courageous Nūbah slaves (*'abīd*) 'who do not understand speech'. These slave soldiers, it is recorded under the events of the previous year,[130] were dressed by Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib in fezes (*ṭarābish*) and red broadcloth (*fūkh*) and armed with muskets (costing) twenty *qaflahs* (equivalent to two *riyāls*) or more; this is suggestive of Turkish uniform.

Al-Qāsim now turned to besiege the Imām as already stated, and he was obliged to sue for truce and recognise al-Manṣūr as Imām.

After al-Qāsim had thrown off allegiance to Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib and dropped his name from the address (*khuṭbah*) he set up a mint at Ṣan'ā' where he struck coins which he engraved (*naqasha*) with al-Manṣūr's name, at the same time ordering the Mawāhib currency (*ḍarībah*) to be abolished, and the mint at al-Mawāhib fell into disuse. Al-Manṣūr also opened mints in Shahārah and Kawkabān.

The rising star was now al-Qāsim and, in 1128/1716, he renounced his allegiance to al-Manṣūr and proclaimed himself Imām, taking the name al-Mutawakkil.[131] Besides Ṣan'ā' he held Aden, Mocha and the Tihāmah ports, Ḥajjah and Kuḥlān, which meant that he controlled the port revenues. Al-Manṣūr on the contrary was only Lord of Shahārah and some neighbouring districts so, as Zabārah[132] expresses it, 'the hearts of the tribes became estranged from him and they turned away from him because of the departure of the revenues that had been in his hands, and this continued till he died' in 1131/1720.

125 Zabārah says this is nonsense and not in the sources.

126 'Abdullāh . . . al-Jirāfī, *al-Muqtaṭaf min tārīkh al-Yaman*, Cairo, 1370/1951, 174.

127 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 875-6; the text's Ḥumayqāt seems incorrect.

128 Text ibid, I, 605-6.

129 *Bandar* is not always 'a port', but must be so here.

130 Ibid, I, 608.

131 Ibid, I, 607.

132 *Nashr al-'arf*, I, 617.

Al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn (1128-1139/1716-1727)

This Imām's prowess as a warrior in the reign of Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib had roused the latter's jealousy and fear of him, as has been seen. In 1119/1707-8 he was appointed by Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib to campaign against the Ḥāshid tribes and he sent with him the *naqīb* Ṣāliḥ Ḥubaysh, the Kabīr of the Bakīl tribes—an interesting case of an Imām using one powerful confederation against another. Al-Qāsim duly chastised the Ḥāshid tribes, entering Khamir and gaining complete control of the territory; he built a wall round 'Amrān. Ṣāliḥ Ḥubaysh however took to intriguing against him, but al-Qāsim's army remained loyal, and al-Qāsim executed him at Khamir.[133] Following this the Imām made him governor of Ṣan'ā', but he evaded the Imām's order to assassinate those Dhū Ḥusayn tribesmen of Barat invited by him to Ṣan'ā'—this would indeed have been the grossest treachery.

A relatively tranquil decade followed after the establishment of al-Qāsim as Imām with the title al-Mutawakkil. Al-Shawkānī gives him a good character in that he spent on the poor from the treasuries (*buyūt al-amwāl*), but he is said to have been noted for amassing money though generous.

In 1135/1722-3 Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, later to rival his own son in the Imāmate (see p.84b), proclaimed his *da'wah* in the Mashriq but the famous Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr[134] managed to reconcile and bring him back to his allegiance.

A year before Mutawakkil's death (1138/1726) the Dhaybān tribe of Arḥab had grown restive and had taken to robbery on the roads. A group of these Dhaybān in Ṣan'ā' agreed to stir up trouble in the town and loot the Sūq. After the Imām had come from the Friday Prayer at the Jāmi' Mosque he stopped to make the customary review of the troops in the Maydān al-Qaṣr. The tribes, including the Arḥabīs of Ḥabār and Dhaybān came up (as spectators ?). One of Mutawakkil's *mamlūk* horsemen—perhaps making a display as in the Niebuhr drawing (p.143)—involuntarily turned his course a little towards these tribes and one Arḥabī rose up against the *mamlūk*, others fired their muskets at the horsemen, and one was killed and fell in front of Mutawakkil. Cool-headed from many battles, the Imām sent a messenger to enquire about the reason for the shooting and caution them, but the Arḥabīs paid no attention to him and wanted to cut him down. Mutawakkil then permitted their blood to be shed and came forth to do battle in person. Al-Jirāfī[135] adds that the Imām ordered the streets and roads to be guarded[136] and houses locked—the fighting went on till night. Arḥab lost 100 men slain and 600 taken prisoner. This affray is typical as arising from a misunderstanding and the hot blood of the tribes.[177]

The incident might have led to serious consequences, for next year Arḥab invited Ḥāshid and Bakīl to join it in taking vengeance and expunging the shame (*akhdh al-thār wa-maḥw al-'ār*). The tribes responded, 'Alī b. Qāsim al-Aḥmar, Chief of Ḥāshid, and Nāṣir b. Juzaylān, Chief of Bakīl, met with the Imām's son al-Ḥusayn at 'Amrān to attract him to their group. Arḥab upset the country about al-Rawḍah, and others went on to the west of Ṣan'ā'—against whom the Imām despatched his forces to Bāb al-Manjal. Then once more the celebrated Muḥammad Ismā'īl al-Amīr mediated between them and al-Ḥusayn returned with the tribes of 'Amrān.

Shortly after this Mutawakkil died and was buried at the side of the Qubbat al-Mutawakkil which was called 'the Garden of Musk' at Bāb al-Sabaḥah—he had built a large house next to it. Other pious works of his were an addition to the Ṣan'ā' Jabbānah, and building the Jāmi' of Ḥaddah.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (1135/1723) and al-Manṣūr al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim (1139-1161/1727-1748)

On his father's death, his rebellious son al-Ḥusayn[138] left 'Amrān for Ṣan'ā' where, some days after his father's funeral, he proclaimed his *da'wah*, taking the title of al-Manṣūr. He entered the Dār al-Jāmi' for the taking of allegiance (*bay'ah*) which was paid him by most of the people in Ramaḍān of 1139/1727. Among other claimants to the Imāmate however was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, a descendant of Imām al-Mahdī Aḥmad who made his counter *da'wah* at Ẓafār, north west of Ṣan'ā'.

The Hamdān tribes of Ḥāshid and Bakīl massed under the leadership of al-Aḥmar and Nāṣir b. Juzaylān in support of Nāṣir. Al-Aḥmar went to Ṣan'ā' as a peace-maker (*muṣliḥ*)[139] and met with al-Manṣūr at 'Aṣir village. The Imām arranged for the Amīrs of his slave-soldiers (*'abīd* or *mamālīk*) to assassinate al-Aḥmar—he was murdered in the Imām's tent and his head, fixed on a spear, was taken by the Imām into Ṣan'ā', under a hail of bullets from al-Aḥmar's men. This caused a tremendous stir all over the Yemen. The tribes with al-Aḥmar's son rose to take vengeance and advanced on Ṣan'ā' by way of Madhbaḥ, while a Bakīl group approached the city from the south. The parties fought indecisively, and much more fighting followed. Zabārah claims that al-Aḥmar's aspiration was to become sole ruler of part of the country, throwing off the Khalīfah's overlordship, i.e. the suzerainty of the Imām. This assertion is reminiscent of the near contemporary state of affairs in our own time between Imām Aḥmad Ḥamīd al-Dīn and the al-Aḥmar family. An unusual, if fleeting, combination, too, was the mutual aid of the Makārimah[140] of Ṭaybah in Wādī Ḍahr and the Imām against his rival al-Nāṣir.

After his sons had been captured by the Imām and imprisoned in the Qaṣr, al-Nāṣir came about 1141/1729 to the court (*al-ḥaḍrat al-Manṣūriyyah*) to pay him allegiance.[141] He settled in Ṣan'ā' to devote himself entirely to scholarship. Al-Manṣūr received him well, honoured and respected him, assigning maintenance (*rizq*) to him, though his son stayed in prison till the reign of al-Mahdī 'Abbās (1161/1748). Al-Nāṣir's intercession would be accepted by the Imām (*maqbūl al-shafā'ah*) and he was generous to aid (*kāfil'an*) widows and orphans. He is described as an *'ālim* of note, an *imām* in the science of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), an excellent poet and the collector of a fine library (*khazā'in*).

A significant sign of the further decay of Imāmic power was the murder in 1144/1731-2 by Faḍl b. 'Alī al-'Abdalī in Lahej of the Imām's agent (*'āmil*) and others, along with the entry of Yāfi'ī tribesmen into Qa'ṭabah through the treachery of certain of its people. The Imām despatched Ḥāshid and Bakīl tribesmen against the 'Abdalī who slaughtered sacrificial animals in the markets of Yāfi' (*dhabaḥ fī aswāq Yāfi' al-'aqā'ir*)[142] and took refuge with the Yāfi'ī Sultan, Ibn 'Afīf of al-Qārah. He managed to persuade Ibn 'Afīf to drive the Imām's forces from Aden and Lahej and from that date the 'Abdalīs, themselves of Yāfi' stock

133 Ibid, II, 357.
134 See the writer's 'The Yemeni poet al-Zubayrī and his polemic against the Zaydī Imāms', *Arabian Studies*, 1978, V, 111-14.
135 Op. cit., 180; *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 359. The accounts differ.
136 *Ḥirāsah*—perhaps guarded by *ḥaras al-layl*?
137 At the Ta'izz 'Urḍī in 1969, when visiting with the Mayor of the city, the garrison nearly came to an affray with his escort as to whether the latter be permitted to enter the 'Urḍī.
138 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 515.
139 Ibid, II, 486.
140 The 'Ismā'īlī' sect.
141 Sources consulted allude to an earlier peace (*ṣulḥ*) by which al-Manṣūr retained Ṣan'ā' and some districts, but the *khuṭbah* in the city was made in al-Nāṣir's name and al-Manṣūr paid him allegiance. He later renounced al-Nāṣir and routed al-Nāṣir's supporters. R. L. Playfair, *History of Arabia Felix*, Bombay, 1859, 115, says al-Nāṣir, supported by Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn (Sharaf al-Dīn, cf. *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 632 *seq.*) of Kawkabān 'made himself master of the whole country with the exception of Ṣan'ā'.'
142 *'Aqā'ir* are cattle or sheep slaughtered in front of a person, group or even building to invoke aid. Cf. Aḥmad Faḍl b. 'Alī Muḥsin al-'Abdalī, *Hadiyyat al-zaman*, Cairo, 1351 H, 121, 43, 118.

held the lordship (*imārah*) of Lahej. A Yemeni[143] historian nevertheless maintains that he made no open rejection of obedience to the Imām nor did he leave off the prayer for him at the Friday Prayer.

The loss of Aden and Lahej cannot but have meant a diminution in the revenues coming into Ṣan'ā', and most likely the Imām's brother Aḥmad who took over the governorship at Ta'izz and would not obey the Imām, would appropriate revenues there to himself.

Among al-Manṣūr's benefactions was the construction of the minaret of Masjid Mūsā in the highest part of Ṣan'ā' by way of compensation for the minaret of the Wahb b. Munabbih which he had ordered to be demolished since it was outside the city wall. The minaret, completed in 1160/1747 cost 6,000 *riyāls*. When al-Manṣūr died he was buried near al-Abhar Mosque to which he had made an extension. In 1154/1741-2 Ibrāhīm son of Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib completed the construction of the wall at Ṣan'ā'. Perhaps this would be a renovation only.[144]

Al-Mahdī 'Abbās b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim (1161-1189/1748-1775)

Al-Mahdī 'Abbās, son of al-Manṣūr, appears to have come to an accession uncontested by rival aspirants to the Imāmate. Many of those who had cast off obedience to his father paid allegiance to him. He is accounted one of the great Zaydī Imāms. Niebuhr, who had audiences with him in 1763, states that he was the son of a slave-woman, a negress, and of dark complexion like his mother's side. A little naively he adds, 'Had it not been for some negro traits his countenance might have been thought a good one!'

As described by al-Shawkānī,[145] he was a perspicacious Imām, keenly intelligent, just, strong at management (*qawiyy al-tadbīr*), high-minded, with a penchant for scholars, dispensing justice to the wronged, diplomatic (*sayūs*),[146] resolute/prudent (*ḥāzim*), watching over the state of his subjects, scrutinising the behaviour of his *'āmils*, no secret state of affairs being hidden from him—having spies who would bring it to his ears. Those close to him (*khawāṣṣu-hu*) had a respectful fear (*haybah*) for him in their hearts, doing nothing without the knowledge that it would be reported to him. Thus many injustices were removed. In dealing with the rebellious he would at times reconcile them by gifts/stipends (*'aṭā'*), at times he would send a body of troops to intervene between these 'tyrants' (*bughāh*) and the peasants (*ra'iyyah*).[147] His power in the Yemen grew great and his reputation reached all quarters. Because of his generosity to those of quality, scholars and writers came to him from distant parts. After becoming Khalīfah he used to employ himself in scholarship (*'ilm*) always looking up some book or other when by himself. He was alert to put down any tyrant or rebel. His gifts to many of the *fuqarā'* and *ḍu'afā'*,[148] envoys and ambassadors were many and frequent.

Al-Mahdī 'Abbās, adds al-Shawkānī, preserved the border regions of his kingdom by his energy and vigorous assault.[149] He behaved as he chose in dealing with affairs, managing important matters by himself without his ministers having any say with him but, on the contrary, doing as he ordered them—nor could they dissemble to him in any affair of the kingdom or deceive him over any case. He had a perfect discrimination about men and complete experience of the sons of his age. He had the ability to strip the pretence off anyone making an outward show of asceticism (*zuhd*), virtue and rejection of worldly things on the surface but not in reality.

Throughout the twenty eight years of his reign al-Mahdī 'Abbās remained settled in Ṣan'ā'. Among the many abuses existing before him that he abolished were, according to his contemporary, Qāḍī Aḥmad Qāṭin, the removal of the billeting (*ṣarf*) of (visiting) tribes on the houses of the Ṣan'ānīs and the 'payments (*aswāq*)'[150] imposed on the people—he used to levy these among the merchants (*yufarriq 'ala 'l-tujjār*) and impose levies (*yughrim*) on a group of them along with the troops (*ajnād*).[151] He prohibited the commandeering (*sukhrah*) of camels and did away with half of the imposts (*jibāyāt*),[152] 'and if God will, he will do away with them all!' He kept a tight rein on his retainers (*khāṣṣah*)[153] and in most of the country only the (legal) dues specifically were collected from the *ra'āyā*, and he prohibited the customary perquisites (? *siyāsāt*) collected from the *ra'āyā*. He prohibited the taking of money in the Dīwān al-Sharī'ah and assigned to those connected with it proper stipends which rendered them independent (of taking bribes).

Al-Mahdī was punctilious in performing the Ṣalāt al-Ẓuhr, noon prayer, in the Dīwān as a group (*jamā'ah*) at the beginning of the time for it and he would go to perform the Friday Prayer at the beginning of the time for it also. He forbade anyone to give him the *salām* in the Jāmi' Mosque so as not to make it like the Dīwān. He gave alms and aid to the needy. A group of pious men (*atqiyā'*) were sent to teach the prayer and he built mosques where needed in Ṣan'ā' and elsewhere.

In 1180/1767 al-Mahdī 'Abbās was involved in an important *waqf* question at Ṣan'ā'. Certain of his entourage (*khāṣṣah*) had proposed that he purchase *waqf* property in Wādī Sha'ūb north of Ṣan'ā' on the basis of an exchange (*bi-'l-mu'āwaḍah*)[155] (*sci.* for property elsewhere). This roused the aged Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr, now in his eighthieth year, who had played so active a part as a conciliator, settling disputes between members of the House of al-Qāsim, and he wrote an address[156] to the Imām recounting the latter's virtues, many of which are set forth above. Others mentioned in the address are that the Imām had maintained

143 Luṭf Allāh b. Jaḥḥāf quoted by al-Jirāfī, 182. Al-'Abdalī, op. cit., 124, on the contrary says that Faḍl b. 'Alī threw off obedience to the Imām of Ṣan'ā' in 1141/1728 and proclaimed himself independent (*amīr mustaqill*).

144 *Nashr al-'arf*, I, 66.

145 *Al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, I, 310 seq.

146 *Gloss. dat.*, 1999, *sayūs*, habile, bon politique.

147 *Ra'iyyah*, properly 'subjects', but seems to mean taxpaying farmers.

148 *Fuqarā'*, needy, but especially among the Shāfi'īs, religious persons; *ḍu'afā'* non-fighting men. *Bughāh*, tyrants, are opponents of the Zaydī Imāms.

149 Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia*, trans. Heron, II, 46-7, speaks of the following as 'The independent states of Yemen, beside the dominions of the Imams':

Aden under a 'particular prince'
Kawkabān possessed by a Sayyid (Sharaf al-Dīn)
Qabā'il or Ḥāshid wa-Bakil, many shaykhs united in a sort of confederation
'Abū 'Arīsh belonging to a Sharīf
Khawlān (Banī 'Āmir) under a shaykh
Ṣa'dah, belonging to a Sayyid, and some independent shaykhs
Najrān (under the Makramī)
Qaḥṭān
Nihim
Khawlān (east of Ṣan'ā') under four independent shaykhs
Jawf or Mārib governed by a Sharīf with some independent shaykhs. The Sharīf houses govern Mārib, Ḥarīb and Rakhwān
Yāfi' under three independent shaykhs, the Sultan of Raṣṣāṣ and Majdabah, the Sultan of Mawṣaṭah, and the Sultan of Qārah
Niebuhr's objective assessment is certainly a more precise picture of the actual state of affairs than what one derives from the Arab historians.

150 Cf.*Gloss. dat*, 2001

151 Cf.*gharāmah* p.41a(n). The *ajnād* are probably soldier-tax-collectors.The early 9th/15th century *Mulakhkhaṣ al-fiṭan*, describing Rasūlid administration, speaks of customary gifts to reviewing officials at the two Feasts, a *jundī* of the garrison paying ten dinars. Only a *jundī* who was making money in some way could pay so large a sum.

152 The reading *jināyāt* of *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 8, is clearly incorrect. Qāṭin evidently concurs that these taxes are illegal. Playfair, op. cit., 121, remarks on the exactions of the Governor of Mocha of 50 per cent on merchants buying Indian goods and a 'heavy anchorage duty'.

153 His officials and tax-collectors?

154 Dozy, *Supplément*, *siyāsāt*, droit coutumier.

155 Hans Wehr's dictionary defines *mu'āwaḍah* as 'a commutative contract on the basis of "*do ut des*"'.

156 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 8 seq.

the change for silver coin in a fixed ratio (? *ṣarf al-darāhim 'alā ḥālah wāḥidah*)[157] 'whereas the former (Imāms) kept on changing them (the silver coin) once or twice each year. Ṣāḥib al-Mawāhib, I have heard, changed them thrice in one month. Whenever the former (Imāms) (made a different rate of) change for it (*kasaraha*)[158] God's servants lost much money. Another thing is the stopping of the pipes of the band (*kasr mazāmīr al-nawbah*) which were a calamity.[159] He commends furthermore the Imām's *jihād* against Ḥāshid and Bakīl, his clearing open immorality and singing girls (*al-fasād wa-'l-maghānī*) from Ṣan'ā', and of women displaying themselves,[160] and his giving the troops at the court decent pay and rations (*kifāyat al-ajnād fi 'l-ḥaḍrah*).

'But,' he continues, 'neither selling nor exchange (*munāqalah*) of the *waqf* is lawful . . . You must be aware, Mawlā-nā, that the best of the Ṣan'ā' *waqf* properties is Sha'ūb, for being close to the city, the mosques enjoy its lucerne (*qaḍb*), tamarisk (*ithl/athl*) and grain (*ṭa'ām*) without toiling, on account of its proximity, so that no other properties can take its place.' He recommends him to open up a long buried *ghayl* with which to irrigate the *waqf* properties of Sha'ūb so that grain may become plentiful, citing the example of his ancestor al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan who opened his *ghayl* at al-Rawḍah from which the choicest grapes are irrigated.

Politico-Military Events of the Reign

When established as Imām, al-Mahdī 'Abbās at once sent to Ta'izz to settle with its governor, his uncle; this was accomplished once more through the intermediary of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr. A few years later, in 1164/1750-51, however, trouble was caused by a magician (*sāḥir*), a writer of talismans, Aḥmad al-Ḥasanī of al-Sharaf, known as Abū 'Alāmah who won a following among the common folk. He destroyed many forts held by the Ḥāshid and Bakīl Mashāyikh, expelling their garrisons, but was ultimately slain and his head sent to the Imām. A raid in summer 1172/1759 of the Bakīl of al-Baraṭ[161] directed against the unarmed (*ḍu'afā'*) peasants of the Imām's territory was routed at al-Madārah of Jahrān, two days to the south of Ṣan'ā'. This victory was sufficiently notable for Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr to indite a poem,

> Who would suppose warriors of Baraṭ
> Would come as prisoners, walking in chains?

Again in 1184/1770-1 Ḥasan al-'Ansī, Chief of the Baraṭ tribes revolted and al-Mahdī sent most of his cavalry, infantry and tribal levies to intercept him. Al-'Ansī gave him the slip by taking a different road and panic ensued when the Ṣan'ānīs found him suddenly close by in Wādī Sa'wān east of Ṣan'ā'. Al-Manṣūr made a sortie on him from the Qaṣr with a small force, and al-Mahdī, arriving from the west helped drive him off.

The incident created by Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr when he neglected to mention the name of the Imām al-Qāsim the Great at the Friday address is widely known,[162] as is his liberal attitude towards the Shāfi'ī rite. This took place in 1166/1753 but opposition to him continued over the years and, in 1182/1768, a Qāḍī group in Baraṭ wrote to the ulema of Ḥūth, Kawkabān and Dhamār inviting them to join their party in revolt against the Qāsimī Dawlah because the people of Ṣan'ā' had come to act contrary to the tenets of the Prophet's House (*madhhab Ahl al-Bayt*), and were introducing heresies (*bida'*), alleging that it was Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl who had done this since some of his followers were raising and clasping their hands in the prayer. They wanted him to be banished from Ṣan'ā'. The rejoinder of the Kawkabān-Ḥūth ulema was that this was followed by many Ahl al-Bayt ulema including Sayyid Zayd b. 'Alī[163] himself. So the Baraṭ Qāḍīs were in error and Sayyid Muḥammad . . . Ibn al-Amīr is a *mujtahid*, and every *mujtahid* is right (*muṣīb*), while Ibn al-Amīr himself riposted with a resounding poem (*qaṣīdah ṭannānah*)! This famed scholar, politician and poet died in his ninetieth year in Sha'bān of the year 1182/1768 at Ṣan'ā' where he was buried west of the minaret of al-Madrasah Mosque.[164]

Playfair[165] speaks of a rebellion in the Ṣan'ā' district in 1772 occasioned by a scarcity of corn. The rebels obtained possession of a stronghold and defied the Imām who took the field in person with a good train of artillery commanded by a 'Scotch renegade called Campbell', but it was the threat of mortars and shells to be constructed by a 'French renegade' that brought the rebels to sue for mercy.

Niebuhr[166] states that the Imām had lost Aden, Abū 'Arīsh, Qa'ṭabah and Ta'izz—this is not, strictly speaking, true if applied to al-Mahdī 'Abbās of whom al-Shawkānī says that no one rebelled against but he subdued them. Niebuhr's statement adds that the revenue had fallen from approximately 830,000 *riyāls* in al-Mahdī Muḥammad's day to 500,000 *riyāls* (it was as low as 300,000 *riyāls* in the reign of the Imām's father, al-Manṣūr) but al-Mahdī 'Abbās did not lack for money. In Ṣan'ā' alone he had 1,800 horses, apart from those at 'Amrān and Dhamār, and camels without number.

During his day the famous Qāḍī Yaḥyā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ṣaḥūlī[167] was for a short period the Grand Qāḍī (Qāḍi 'l-Quḍāh) to whom much of *sharī'ah* affairs, and indeed affairs of state also, were entrusted. Nevertheless the Imām ceased to favour him for a while, sequestrated most of his properties and imprisoned him for years, though eventually he released him and al-Sahūlī prospered again. Officials whose wealth, however gained, impressed the Imāms as excessive were quite commonly mulcted of it in this fashion.

Al-Mahdī's Benefactions

Al-Mahdī 'Abbās died in 1189/1775. Zabārah reckons his way of life better than that of his father and grandfather before him, and of all his descendants after him. He left great wealth and extensive lands. His palace was in Bustān al-Mutawakkil quarter. His benefactions include, in Ṣan'ā' alone, the building of Qubbat al-Mahdī,[168] west of the Sā'ilah, where he is buried, Masjid al-Taqwā in Ḥārat Bustān al-Sulṭān, Masjid al-Nūr in Ḥārat Mu'ammar, Masjid al-Riḍwān north of Bāb al-Yaman and the completion of Masjid Nuṣayr in the high part of the city. In 1177/1763-4 he ordered the water-channels (*majārī*) of al-Ghayl al-Aswad in the plain (*qā'*) west of al-Jardā' village to be excavated, as also the channels of Ghayl al-Barmakī.[169]

Of all the Imāms of Ṣan'ā' al-Mahdī 'Abbās seems to be nearest the Zaydī ideal of warrior-king, follower of the *sharī'ah*, generous giver and benefactor.

Al-Manṣūr 'Alī b. 'Abbās (1189-1224/1775-1809)

Al-Manṣūr had been appointed governor (*wālī*) of Ṣan'ā' and commander of troops (*amīr al-ajnād*) by his father who ordered

157 The rendering is slightly tentative. For the phrase *darāhim biqash* at an earlier period see *The Portuguese off the south Arabian coast*, 150; it is suggested that here the sense is the rate of *buqshahs* to the silver *qirsh/riyāl*.

158 *Kasara* today means to obtain small change for a coin of a larger denomination. *Kasr* used in the next sentence is rendered as in the present day Ḥaḍramī sense of 'to stop' rather than 'to break'.

159 A play on the words *nawbah* and *nā'ibah*.

160 *Takashshuf al-ḥarim*, leaving off the veil?

161 Of Baraṭ, *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 15 says, 'In the present century it is inhabited by some of the tribes of Dhū Muḥammad and Dhū Ḥusayn of Bakīl, they being the confederacy (*jamrah*) of the Yemen Hamdān tribes. . . The dreaded might (*ba's*) of the Baraṭ tribes continued until, in 1351/1932-3, Nāṣir the victorious, . . .Sayf al-Khilāfah . . .Aḥmad (Imām Yaḥyā's son) subdued them.'

162 See 'The Yemeni poet al-Zubayrī . . .', 111-14.

163 Imām of the Zaydī school.

164 For Ibn al-Amīr's action on the Jews, see p.400b seq.

165 Op. cit., 122.

166 *Travels*, trans. Heron, II, 88.

167 His biography is in *al-Badr al-ṭāli'*, II, 333-8.

168 See p.383 and *Masājid*, 70, with chronogram in verse on the Qubbah.

169 See pp.23a.

him to reside in the Qaṣr about the year 1172/1758. In addition to his military exploits in defence of Ṣan'ā' against the Baraṭ tribes he sent armies to deal with the Khawlān and Ḥadā tribes and demolished their castles. On becoming Imām he restored al-Saḥūlī as Grand Qāḍī and after his death appointed the outstanding scholar Muḥammad al-Shawkānī in his place. Al-Shawkānī has left a sympathetic biography of him, but al-Wāsi'ī[170] allows him a less favourable character, saying that he entrusted everything to three ministers and only occupied himself with buildings and improvements (*iṣlāḥāt*) in Ṣan'ā' and its environs. He put his brother in charge of the Dīwān which met twice a week to examine lawsuits (*khuṣūmāt*). He liked to seclude himself and to sit with women, be they free or slaves. Yet he was brave, generous, hospitable and would enquire about widows and needy persons. For a while all went well.

In the outside world, always a little remote from Ṣan'ā' which had contacts with it only through Mocha, momentous events were in train with a backwash which was to reach the shores of the Yemen. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1799 brought the British of India to the southern end of the Red Sea. A captain Wilson arrived in Ṣan'ā' to parley with the Imām and was lodged in Dār al-Ṣāfiyah in Bīr al-'Azab. Perim (Mayyūn) was occupied by a British Indian force which shortly moved to Aden. In 1801 Sir Home Popham was sent to the Red Sea to attempt to revive the Yemen's extensive trade with the East India Company's possessions which had fallen into sad decay. A Dr. Pringle was sent to Ṣan'ā' and well received there; in early 1802 Popham now in Mocha, proposed to go to Ṣan'ā' himself to enter into a commercial treaty with the Imām. Though the Imām's guest, Popham met with such inhospitable treatment from a greedy tribal shaykh that he turned back at Ta'izz. The Imām in shame and sorrow at Popham's treatment, promised redress, but was evidently powerless to discipline the shaykh.

Within Arabia itself the strict Wahhābī movement—it calls itself the 'Unitarians'—had started on a career of conquest; by 1801 the Wahhābīs were already operating in the Hijaz. A malcontent of Ṣabyā in 'Asīr, brought the Najdī Wahhābīs to the province in 1215/1800-1. They were opposed by the semi-independent chief of the Tihāmah, from Bayt al-Faqīh to Abū 'Arīsh, Sharīf Ḥamūd b. Muḥammad who was elected their leader by the local Sharīfs. Abū Nuqṭah,[171] the Wahhābī leader was successful in capturing Abū 'Arīsh. Sharīf Ḥamūd sued for peace and was forced to join the Wahhābīs. Abū Nuqṭah went on to take Luḥayyah, Hodeidah, Zabīd and Ḥays, but retired to 'Asīr. The two soon fell out and Ḥamūd returned to allegiance to the Imām on the understanding that he would be governor of Luḥayyah, Hodeidah and Bayt al-Faqīh. The Imām sent him a money subsidy and reinforcements of Yām and Bakīl tribesmen. In an engagement with the 'Asīr Najdīs the latter were routed and Abū Nuqṭah slain. Al-Manṣūr now sent forces to bring Ḥamūd into submission but it was defeated.

At the court in Ṣan'ā' rivalry was acute between the eldest prince, Aḥmad, son of an Abyssinian slave, rich but avaricious, and al-Manṣūr's third son 'Abdullāh, of open manner and liberal disposition. The *wazīr*, the *faqīh* Ḥasan al-'Ulufī,[172] had complete control of affairs and behaved arrogantly to many of the Imām's relatives. He was partial to 'Abdullāh though, in the Imām's presence he treated both sons with equal respect. As the aged Imām's strength decayed the princes' hostilities grew more overt and on one occasion they even drew their *jambiyyahs* on one-another in their father's presence. By Valentia's[173] visit in 1805 the old man was approaching dotage.

Ill-feeling had arisen between prince Aḥmad and al-'Ulufī on account of orders issued at the court (Maqām al-Khalīfah) and his curtailment (*taqṣīr*) of the pay of the troops (*arzāq al-junūd*). (It may be remarked that the names of the military amīrs[174] of the Imām's troops in most of the 12th/18th century seem to indicate they were of slave origin.)[175] The minister had also stopped the stipends (*jirāyāt*) to the Bakīl tribes till they cut the roads around Ṣan'ā', plundering and murdering, and many other tribes started to do the same. Qāḍī 'Abdullāh b. Ḥasan[176] al-'Ansī raised the Baraṭ tribes and was cutting the roads in Wādī Ḍahr because al-'Ansī's son had created dissension in the Dār al-Khilāfah and committed an offence against al-'Ulufī for which the Imām had commanded he be executed.

Ṣan'ā' was now in a state of siege and in sore straits for grain rose steeply in price and there was a lack of rains. To relieve the city of the siege Aḥmad sent to arrest al-'Ulufī and when his father demanded the minister's release Aḥmad's soldiers surrounded the palace where the Imām and prince 'Abdullāh were. An agreement was reached whereby Aḥmad took over the administration, but his father was not deposed and both the coinage and address at the Friday Prayer were still kept in his name, Aḥmad nominally acting as minister to his father. At the time of his action against al-'Ulufī, Aḥmad wrote to the tribes making promises to them and they relinquished the siege. Al-Manṣūr died at Dār al-As'ād palace in the next year, 1224/1809, and was buried in Bustān al-Misk near Bāb al-Sabaḥah.

It was al-Manṣūr who constructed Dār al-Ṭawāshī, completed in 1200/1785-6, west of al-Ṭawāshī Mosque. It had 360 living rooms but it lasted under a hundred years when it was all demolished. He built also the Jāmi' of Qaryat al-Qābil, Masjid al-Maḥāmid and Masjid al-Bahmah in Bīr al-'Azab; Masjid al-Ṭawāshī and Masjid Uzdimir he extended, as well as building many houses.

Al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. 'Abbās (1224-31/1809-16)

Al-Shawkānī who had earlier exerted himself to arrange a settlement between prince Aḥmad and al-'Ulufī declares that 'I was the first to render him allegiance—then I had charge of receiving the allegiance to him of his brothers, paternal uncles as well as the rest of the Imām al-Qāsim's house and all the notables and chiefs.' Mutawakkil had been Governor of Ṣan'ā' under his father.

He put to rights what his father had ruined (*aṣlaḥa mā qad afsada wālidu-hu*) except for the Tihāmahs which remained in the hands of the Ashrāf, though he came to terms with Sharīf Ḥamūd to return to him some Tihāmah districts. His brief reign saw much fighting with the northern tribes. Al-Shawkānī says he campaigned widely but was victorious in every campaign he He saw to the security of the roads and the *ra'āyā*.

The year before this Imām died letters arrived in Ṣan'ā' from the Ottoman Sultan and Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, Governor of Egypt, accompanied by magnificent presents, including an elephant which used to parade with the cavalry and go round the

170 *Tārikh al-Yaman*, 2nd ed., Cairo, 1366/1948, 225.

171 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Āmir al-Rufaydī (Rufaydah is an old station on the Iraq pilgrim route). In a Tarīm ms. I found in 1953, and am editing, *Taḥrīḍ al-ikhwān al-kirām wa-badhl al-naṣiḥah fi 'l-taḥarruz min Yām al-li'ām* of Ḥusayn b. Muḥ. . . .Ibrīq al-Ḥabbānī, has much on Wahhābī movements at this period. See for piratical Wahhābīs R. B. Serjeant and G. M. Wickens, 'The Wahhābīs in western Arabia in 1803-4 A.D.' *Islamic culture*, Oct. 1949, 1-4, probably the report (in Persian) of a British agent at Mocha.

172 The history of the 'Ulufī family of *qāḍīs* is given in al-Anisī, *Tarjī' al-aṭyār*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iryānī and 'Abdullāh al-Fā'ishī, Cairo, 1369 H, 265, n.

173 George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea . . . in the years 1801 . . . and 1806*, London, 1809, II, 381.

174 Niebuhr, op. cit., II, 89, says his army has only four generals, shaykhs of Hamdān, Wādi'ah (Wada), Sufyān and Khawlān.

175 Qāḍī Ismā'īl has an unpublished proverb, *'Aja'ib fi 'l-ghirārah wa-'abd ismi-h Muḥammad*, Wonders in a grain-sack and a slave named Muḥammad (also pronounced Miḥimmad, and in Ibb, Miḥimid (diminutive)). The proverb marvels that today so many slaves are called by the names of free men. Slave names are 'Anbar, Barqūq, Murjān, Yāqūt Ṣumṣām, etc. Slave-women (*amah*) also have special names like Jawharah, Yāqūtah, Zumurradah, precious stones.

176 It was his father who had attacked Ṣan'ā' nearly forty years before.

Ṣan'ā' sūqs with its sayce. Al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad had sent them cornelian stones (*'aqīq*) and asked for their support to recover the Tihāmah.

It is recorded that in 1228/1813 he ordered the demolition of some domes over graves—it is likely that this would be an attack on saint-cults of which the Zaydīs disapprove. He amassed arms, treasure and a great library.[177] In the last year of his reign a benefactor completed the building of the large bridge (*al-'aqd al-'aẓīm*) over the Sā'ilah, south of Masjid al-Nahrayn to allow men and beasts to cross it in time of flood.

Al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh b. al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad (1231-1251/1816-1835)

Al-Wāsi'ī gives al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh a poor character[178] as perpetually changing his ministers and punishing[179] them—they in turn kept replacing the local *'āmils* who therefore 'looked after their own interests only.' It was his habit to seclude himself following his pleasures and lusts, listening to music and neglecting affairs of state—through which there was no longer safety for property and on the roads. Robert Finlay of the Bombay Service describes him in 1823 as tall with a dark complexion like an African.

> The government (he says) was exceedingly weak, and the Imām was obliged to subsidise the neighbouring chiefs in order to prevent them plundering his country. The amount thus expended amounted to about a lac of dollars annually; but the independent Shaykhs were year by year increasing in strength, and raising their demands in proportion to their ability to enforce them.
>
> The public reception-room of the Imām was covered with Persian carpets, and silken pillows were arranged round the sides: at one end stood the throne, which was raised two feet from the floor, and covered with crimson velvet and cushions of rich cloth of gold. His private apartments were furnished with less taste, and were crowded with the most heterogeneous articles, such as horse-trappings, arms, organs, time-pieces, common empty bottles, bales of cotton goods, silks, and woollen stuffs. His Highness, as well as the officers of his court, were richly dressed, and exhibited a considerable amount of state and magnificence on all public occasions.[180]

The Turco-Egyptians in Arabia

In 1813, during the last years of al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh's father, Muḥammad 'Alī, the redoubtable Pasha of Egypt, had taken up arms against the Wahhābīs in the Holy Cities of the Hijaz which he restored to the Porte while he himself remained virtual master of the Hijaz. That same year he sent an envoy to Sharīf Ḥamūd of Abū 'Arīsh who returned him an evasive answer. The envoy went on to Ṣan'ā' where 'he was received with such marked distinction and respect as sufficiently showed that the Imām (al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad) was not without his apprehensions of Muḥammad 'Alī's views in that quarter.'[181] He also went on to Mocha. Al-Mutawakkil, as seen above, also thought to use the Turco-Egyptians to his own advantage. Muḥammad 'Alī's forces were heavily engaged with the Wahhābīs till the fall of Dir'iyyah in 1818 but after that a Turkish contingent was sent against Abū 'Arīsh which it took with other coastal towns. Muḥammad 'Alī now entered negotiations with the Imām al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh—the Tihāmah districts captured by the Turco-Egyptians were to be restored to the Imām in consideration of an annual tribute of a lac of *riyāls*. So al-Mahdī sent his governors to all the *bandars*, but appointed an Abū 'Arīsh Sharīf to rule the northern half of the Tihāmah on his behalf.

The Yemen was not however to be freed yet of the Turco-Egyptians for in 1832 a rebellious officer of Muḥammad 'Alī's Hijaz forces, Muḥammad Āghā nick-named Turkchi Bilmas, marched against Hodeidah which he took after a bombardment, gaining possession also of Mocha and Zabīd. In the web of intrigue of the Ottoman Sultan against the Pasha of Egypt the Porte backed him against Muḥammad 'Alī. The Turco-Egyptian forces which were now moving down the coast again, by sea, blockaded Mocha to which Turkchi Bilmas had retired, while tribes from 'Asīr carried it by assault on land. The 'Asīrīs were forced by the Turco-Egyptian commander Ibrāhīm Pasha to surrender Mocha to him (1833). He was to take further steps against al-Mahdī's son a few years later.

Internal Events in the Yemen

Al-Mahdī, although he took a number of actions during his disturbed reign against recalcitrant tribes, lost several large districts to them. In 1233/1817-18 he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Baraṭ tribes at Ṣan'ā' and ordered their chief 'Alī al-Shāyif to be beheaded and his corpse buried in the place for filth (*najāsāt*) outside the city wall near Bāb al-Shu'ūb. This was in retaliation for their assault on Bīr al-'Azab in which they had murdered and pillaged. Bīr al-'Azab at this time was the residence of the Imām's family, the chiefs of state, and great qāḍīs, and of these notables were killed Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Saḥūlī and the Inspector of the Waqfs as well as other Sayyids and scholars. The reason for this was that the Dhū Muḥammad and Dhū Ḥusayn tribes had got the better of the Imām so he ordered them to be put to the ban (*ibāḥah*) in Ṣan'ā' and imprisoned their chiefs and they (the tribesmen) were taken and murdered in the streets and sūqs. Some escaped over the Ṣan'ā' wall—the attack was in order to wipe out the shame (*'ār*) put upon them.

The Imāmate of Sayyid Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Sirājī (1247/1831)

This episode exemplifies a pattern far from uncommon during the centuries of the Zaydī Imāmate in the Yemen, whereby in times of stress claimants arise from houses of Sayyids other than that in power. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sirājī was not of the house of al-Qāsim the Great. He is credited with all the qualifications that are required of a candidate for the Imāmate (*shurūṭ al-imāmah*). Short in duration as his Imāmate was and insofar as can be judged, of no great significance, Yemeni historians appear sympathetic to him as a scholar in opposition to the established dynasty. He was contemporary with al-Shawkānī and both died in the same year.

Al-Sirājī taught in the Jāmi' of Ṣan'ā' where he had a great following among the ulema class. So high was his reputation that the *ahl al-khayr* (benefactors) as al-Shawkānī calls them, would give his students (*ṭalabah*) anything he ordered in the way of clothing and maintenance. He left Ṣan'ā' '*muhājir-an*'[182] accompanied by a number of scholars and, perhaps at their persuasion, he made his *da'wah* to the Imāmate in 1247 or 1248 (between 1831 and 1833). Authorities consulted are imprecise about the place or time, but he was followed by some men of Khawlān, Arḥab, Nihm, Ḥāshid and Bakīl and went to besiege al-Mahdī in Ṣan'ā'. Al-Jirāfī attributes his decision to revolt to his dissatisfaction with the disorderliness of al-Mahdī's conduct. At Ṣan'ā' his tribal followers began to ill-treat the *ra'iyyah* and al-Sirājī took up their defence against their aggressions with the result that they

177 The library had 100,000 books! He collected gold, silver, clothing, precious stones, weapons and 'innumerable medical appliances (*ālāt al-ṭibb*) and simples (*'aqqārāt*).' A doctor once asked him for the 'wing of the green fly' which the Imām was able to give him. He had also chests full of ambergris, musk and watches.

178 Al-Jirāfi and Zabārah, *Nayl al-waṭar*, II, 64, give him, on the contrary, a good character on the authority of al-Shijnī, 'From the time he grew up he used to know only the sword and spear, and was familiar only with striking and thrusting.'

179 Arabic *yu'adhdhib* can mean '*to torture*'—if so probably to extract hidden treasure.

180 Playfair, op. cit., 140.

181 Loc. cit., 131.

182 See definition, p.316b.

deserted him—they were in the movement for what they could get. Al-Wāsi'ī claims that al-Mahdī bribed the tribes to return to their own territory. In traditional Zaydī style al-Sirājī kept urging the tribes to action and *al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa-'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, enjoining the right and forbidding the unseemly. He was assassinated or poisoned in 1250/1834.

Al-Sirājī is presented to us as a man of sincere purpose, scrupulous, but lacking the political chicanery to survive, far less win, in Yemeni politics.

Al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh's Benefactions

Ṣan'ā' owes to this Imām the construction of the Ṭalḥah Mosque as it is today, the addition of lodgings external to the Jāmi' for students strangers (*aghrāb*) to the city, the widening of the Maydān opposite Bāb al-Khalīfah north of the Jāmi', and the building of Ḥammām al-Mutawakkil at Bāb al-Sabaḥah, Ḥammām al-Sulṭān, the Ḥammām of Wādī Ḍahr, among others.

Al-Wāsi'ī[183] names him the last of the Imāms of attack and daring (*al-ṣawlah wa-'l-iqdām*).

Disturbance, Anarchy, Chaos, Foreign Interference and Encroachment

The Yemen was now to enter upon an era of anarchy, confusion and much misery internally, with Turco-Egyptian and Ottoman interference, intrigue or active aggression externally. The occupation of the coastal ports by the Tihāmah Sharīfs obviously weakened the sinews of power of the Ṣan'ā' Imāms who must expend time and treasure to recover the vital revenues of the ports and other lost provinces.

The Zaydī Imāmate in Decline up to the Ottoman Occupation of Ṣan'ā' (1251-1289/1835-1872)

The character given Imām al-Manṣūr 'Alī who succeeded his father in 1251/1835, by Cruttenden[184] who visited him in Ṣan'ā' is unflattering and the scene at his court unedifying. He also had African blood, his mother being said to be an Abyssinian. Suspecting his uncle al-Qāsim was conspiring against him, he imprisoned him, but al-Qāsim escaped to Ta'izz and made an agreement with Ibrāhīm Pasha at Mocha to hand over Ta'izz to the Turco-Egyptians in return for a stipend. Ibrāhīm entered Ta'izz in 1837 but by that time al-Manṣūr was already deposed. He had unwisely dismissed his commander of troops, 'Anbar, and they promptly turned on him in his house at Bustān al-Mutawakkil and imprisoned him. During his year as Imām rains were scarce and streams (*anhār*)[185] went deep, especially at al-Rawḍah so wells had to be deepened there to twice their depth.

The troops put al-Nāṣir 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan into power and he restored some order. He had been an Imām of the Prayer in Qubbat Mahdī 'Abbās and he is said to have put a teacher of the Prayer into every district (*baldah*). When in Wādī Ḍahr for an outing he was treacherously slain by the Bāṭiniyyah[186] and others of Hamdān at Dār al-Ḥajar.

It was at this time, in 1255/1839 that a British-Indian expedition captured Aden from the independent 'Abdalī Sultan. This once great port was sunk so low that when taken it was found to have only some 1,200 inhabitants.

Al-Hādī Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil was now brought out of prison in Ṣan'ā' and made Imām by those in power in the city. The historians have little to say of him. Masjid al-Hādī near Bāb al-Rūm is named after him and in one of his three years as Imām a harvest was so good that the price of 8 *qadaḥs* of *dhurah* fell to one *riyāl*.

Another claimant to be the Expected Mahdī, the *faqīh* Sa'īd b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Ansī the Sufi,[187] rose in his time at Ibb of the Lower Yemen, writing magic squares and talismans. He even struck pure silver coinage in his own name. He was besieged in al-Dunwah fort near 'Udayn and executed in 1257/1841. Shortly after this the Imām recovered Ta'izz and Mocha. In April 1841 he sent a mission to Aden with valuable presents to request British co-operation by sea to aid him recover the Tihāmah ports from the Sharīfs of Abū 'Arīsh who had been oppressing and harassing merchants. The British Political Agent who had been instructed to follow the principle of non-intervention in Arab politics, though sympathetic since Indian merchants were involved, could not accede to the Imām's request though two further missions were sent from Ṣan'ā', the Imām even offering to cede Zayla' to the British.

By 1840 events in Europe had obliged Ibrāhīm Pasha to withdraw from the Yemen and Hijaz. Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha had entertained high hopes of taking Aden, only to be forestalled by the British.[188] The Yemeni Tihāmah then fell into the hands of the Abū 'Arīsh Sharīf Ḥusayn who was to rule it from Mocha on behalf of the Porte and pay the Pasha of Egypt an annual tribute of 70,000 *riyāls*.

On al-Hādī's death the deposed Imām al-Manṣūr was reinstated, but about two years later defeated and replaced by al-Mutawakkil Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā who was supported by Sharīf Ḥusayn, and entered Ṣan'ā'. Mutawakkil soon fell out with Sharīf Ḥusayn, and took from him Zabīd, Bayt al-Faqīh and Mocha, besieging the Sharīf in al-Quṭay' village and making him prisoner there in the *qal'ah*. The Sharīf's daughter, evidently a woman of spirit, took herself off to Najrān with horses as *'aqīrahs*[189] to seek help there for her father. The guards who had sworn oaths to keep the Sharīf prisoner broke their faith for a bribe of 25,000 *riyāls*. Yām (of Najrān or Ḥarāz) answered the appeal to aid the Sharīf and defeated Mutawakkil who had to retire to Ṣan'ā', and they played havoc in Zabīd.

Mutawakkil was now awkwardly placed for whenever he tried to go out of the city to quell tribal insurgencies his soldiers refused to obey him. His minister in Ṣan'ā' was Abū Zayd b. al-Ḥasan al-Miṣrī,[190] notoriously oppressive and unjust who would chain a man from head to foot and beat him unless he ransomed himself with *riyāls*.

Things had come to a pretty pass. In 1264/1848 another claimant to the Imāmate, al-Manṣūr Aḥmad b. Hāshim had set himself up as Imām in Ṣa'dah, the Imām was at war with Sharīf Ḥusayn and had many troubles elsewhere. At this juncture the Porte decided to embark on the conquest of the Yemen. A fleet was sent under Tawfiq Pasha from Jeddah and a land force under Muḥammad b. 'Awn, the Sharīf of Mecca, to Hodeidah. The Abū 'Arīsh Sharīf Ḥusayn they summoned to surrender—he had no alternative but to do so, and with it the other towns of the Tihāmah. Tawfiq then summoned Mutawakkil to surrender his dominions to the Porte. Mutawakkil, though reluctant and the northern tribes scornful of the Ottoman Turks, was induced to come down to Hodeidah and he signed a convention in 1265/1849

183 Ibid, 228.
184 Quoted by Playfair, 144, from *JRGS*, London, 1838, VIII, 267-89.
185 This misfortune is naively attributed to the fault of the Imām's *wazīr* who, in honour of al-Manṣūr's visit, had the village sprinkled with rosewater.
186 The 'Ismā'īlis' who live there.
187 Al-Shamāḥī Tārikh al-Yaman, 158, states that he proclaimed himself Imām, and credits al-'Ansi with anti-Fāṭimī and anti-Quraysh sentiments—at least where candidature for the Imāmate is concerned. This needs further evidence which al-Shamāḥī does not give.
188 Cf. H. Dodwell, *Founder of modern Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali*, Cambridge, 1931, reprinted 1967, 150-1, for his rivalry with the British over Aden.
189 See n. 142 supra.
190 For his actions in the Mint case see p. 236b, n.78. *Ṣafaḥāt majhūlah* (see following n. 125), 28, mentions the imprisonment of Abū Zayd and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Maḥfūẓ from south of Ṣan'ā' and al-Rawḍah respectively.

by which he would become a vassal of the Porte, receiving half the revenues of the country, the rest to go to the Imperial Treasury —and 1,000 Turkish regulars were to garrison Ṣan'ā'.[191]

The Turks arrived at Ṣan'ā' on Thursday 5 Ramaḍān, 1265/15 July, 1849 and immediately put a garrison into the Qaṣr. On the Friday the Ṣan'ānīs rose to a man and slew every Turk except those who took refuge in the Qaṣr and Bustān al-Sulṭān. The story goes they heard the Turks saying that tomorrow we'll take this house and that woman. Mutawakkil sent the survivors back to Hodeidah on the 'Īd al-Iftār with their leader Tawfīq Pasha who died there of his wounds.

The Ṣan'ā' populace held responsible the learned Qāḍī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Amrānī, the Inspector of the Awqāf, for advising Mutawakkil to introduce the Turks. So they set on his house and looted it, destroying his library of 1,000 of the most splendid books. They also looted the house of 'Abdullāh al-Hindī described as 'the book broker (*dallāl al-kutub*).'

The Ṣan'ānīs then seized Mutawakkil and brought back al-Manṣūr 'Alī to office though he lacked some of the qualifications (*shurūṭ*) for the Imāmate. He imprisoned Mutawakkil in the Qaṣr, loaded with eight manacles and had him put to death.[192] Jirāfī's verdict is that 'he was one of the most accomplished of men (*kamalat al-rijāl*) but fate was not on his side.' He was wrongfully put to death in 1266/1849-50.

Mutawakkil's benefactions include work on the *ḥammām* of Wādī Ḍahr near Dār al-Ḥajar in 1263/1847, and some ablution places (*maṭāhīr*) at Qubbat al-Mutawakkil al-Qāsim to which he led water from al-Ghayl al-Aswad, as well as lodgings over the *maṭāhīr* for *muhājirs*, students of *'ilm* from outside Ṣan'ā' (*aghrāb*). When the court of Masjid al-Nahrayn was being excavated a golden idol was found—this may be taken as evidence that there had been pre-Islamic buildings there. Al-Wāsi'ī incidentally reports tales of buried treasure in the market at Bāb al-Yaman where straw, *dhurah*-cane and firewood are sold.[193] It is recorded that a thunderbolt fell in Bustān al-Mutawakkil and entered the Manẓar[194] al-Ṣīnī, all the walls of which were decorated with porcelain (*ṣīnī*). About this period are mentioned several royal palaces, those of the Imām and his retinue being known as al-Sarāyā; these were Dār al-Ṭawāshī, Dār al-Dhahab, Dār al-Bustān, Dār al-Jāmi' etc.,

Sore afflictions now befell Ṣan'ā'—the roads were cut—the tribes rebelled. The oppression (*ẓulm*) of the minister al-Miṣrī in Ṣan'ā' drove some Sayyids and Qāḍīs to take refuge with the rival Imām al-Manṣūr Aḥmad b. Hāshim at Ṣa'dah who besieged Ṣan'ā' in 1850 with tribal support and even managed to stay in it for about three months. But the Sayyids and notables of the city chose as Imām a scholar, al-Mu'ayyad billāh al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. The raiding tribes looted Bustān al-Mutawakkil so al-'Abbās emptied it and Dār al-Ṭawāshī of everything and set himself up with his soldiers and amīrs in the Qaṣr. After fighting in Ṣan'ā' he gave in to al-Manṣūr Aḥmad b. Hāshim who imprisoned him.

Taking fright at this al-Manṣūr 'Alī b. al-Mahdī left Ṣan'ā', stirred up the tribes and was acknowledged Imām under the new title of al-Mutawakkil. With 6,000 tribesmen he surrounded Ṣan'ā' and looted Bīr al-'Azab leaving nothing but stones. Al-Manṣūr Aḥmad fled to Arḥab. Within the next few years some four more Imāms appeared in various districts of the north. In this sorry situation the Tihāmah was held by the Turks, Ḥarāz by the Makramī[195] lord of Najrān and the Lower Yemen by the Bakīl tribes.

There was fighting in Ṣan'ā' again in 1268/1851-2 between the supporters of a new Imām, al-Hādī Ghālib, and al-Mahdī 'Abbās holding respectively the east and west of the city. Their soldiers occupied the minarets and large houses, the townsfolk were confined to their homes, the sūqs locked up and the mosques including the Jāmi' closed for about two months. Many ulema left for other Yemeni cities. Some large houses like Dār al-Miḥdādah and Dār al-Ḥajar of Ḍahr were destroyed. Playfair[196] speaks of complete disorder; 'robberies and murder were of every day occurrence, the Jews and foreign merchants were despoiled of all they possessed, and this once magnificent city was abandoned to anarchy and confusion.'

At last the merchants of Ṣan'ā', to ameliorate, in some measure, this state of affairs, set up a governor (*wālī*) of their own, the shaykh al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥaymī al-Suwaydī 'who was not a scholar (*min ahl al-'ilm wa-'l-ma'rifah*),' in 1269/1852-53. In the following year the ulema and notables of the city recognised an Āl Wazīr Sayyid of Wādi 'l-Sirr as Imām only to depose him again and select another. As al-Wazīr left he cursed the Ṣan'ānīs and their cattle died, their grapes were stricken with the disease known as *dhaḥal*[197] and blessing (*barakah*)[198] was withheld from the grain because of the evilness (*fasād*) of the people. Not unnaturally plague arrived next year.

Ṣan'ā' was besieged anew in 1274/1857-58 when the current Imām in this game of box and cox, al-Hādī Ghālib, fell out with al-Ḥaymī who is decribed as his *wazīr*, and trying to enter Ṣan'ā' found its gates locked in his face. During the siege al-Ḥaymī demolished Dār al-Ṭawāshī,[199] a mansion of 360 rooms (*manzil*) reckoned the splendour of the age—the decorations (*ṣibāghāt*)[200] of which had cost al-Manṣūr b. al-'Abbās 70,750 *riyāls* in Yemeni currency. Al-Ḥaymī sold its doors, window-frames and shutters (*ṭiqān*) and timbers. It was perhaps about this time or before that he incited the populace to plunder and destroy the house of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Kibsī in Ḥārat al-Filayḥī, its doors and windows also being looted. The valuables placed in al-Kibsī's safe-keeping (*al-wadā'i'*)[201] by their owners were stolen with the rest. Al-Kibsī who was acting with the title of Shaykh al-Islām, though he had no power for it all lay in al-Ḥaymī's hands, had wanted to imprison al-Ḥaymī for debts he owed people and al-Ḥaymī revenged himself in this way. Grieved at the loss of his large library al-Kibsī went as a refugee (*muhājir*) to Barāṭ.

In their disgust[202] at his misconduct the Ṣan'ānīs set up 'Abdullāh Yūsuf Ḥuwaydir[203] as their Shaykh and besieged al-Ḥaymī in the Qaṣr. Al-Ḥaymī managed to slip away intending to reach the Turks in the Tihāmah, but he was intercepted and taken to al-Ṭawīlah west of Kawkabān where Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad had proclaimed himself Imām with the title al-Hādī. Al-Hādī struck his own coin (*darāhim 'adadiyyah*) in Thulā, but in 1278/1861 proclamation was made in Ṣan'ā' abolishing his

191 Details are given by Zabārah, *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 47-8. The period of anarchy, 1263-1287/1847-1870, is covered in great and interesting detail by an anonymous chronicler whose account has recently been published by Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Yamaniyyah as *Ṣafaḥāt majhūlah min tārikh al-Yaman*, ed. Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Sayāghī, Ṣan'ā', 1398/1978.

192 Al-Jirāfī says that before going to Hodeidah he had asked for a Turkish contingent to help him enforce his orders, and al-Wāsi'ī that he welcomed the possibility of using Turkish troops to chastise the tribes, and for these reasons incurred the odium of the Ṣan'ānīs.

193 He adds that west of Masjid Dāwūd, north of the public highway on the wall of which are alabaster rooms with Ḥimyarī writing, is a place anciently a *kanīsah*, where sweepings and garbage are nowadays thrown, in which there is said to be treasure.

194 *Manẓar* is discussed on p.443a.

195 The 'Ismā'īlīs'.

196 Op. cit., 155.

197 Al-Wāsi'ī, op. cit., 245. When the grapes are near ripeness and perfection, they turn black and go bad.

198 *Barakah* means rain, *raḥmah*.

199 Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmī tells me that popular tales (*qīl*) are that it was built from the clay taken from Ghuraq Rūm (p.99a), but this does not look very likely. He quoted a saying, *Dār al-Tawāshī mā minna-hā shī*, which would mean that it is useless.

200 *Ṣibāghāt*, perhaps paint and plaster ornament? Al-Wāsi'ī, writing in 1927, says the *riyāl* of those days is worth a hundred today, but this is probably not to be understood literally.

201 Money etc. is often deposited with a person of the religious aristrocracy where it would be as safe as anything ever is in south Arabia. The Prophet himself returned what was deposited with him before leaving Mecca.

202 Playfair, 156, quoting Stern, describes him as 'an olive coloured Arab, in whose lustreless eyes and sunken cheeks vice had stamped her indelible characters'!

203 Al-Wāsi'ī, 249.

coinage, after which no-one accepted it. Like other Imāms of the period he claimed to have the Jinn in his service[204] (*yastakhdim al-jinn*) and they would inform him about (forth-coming) happenings. With a tribal following al-Hādī entered Ṣan'ā', taking al-Ḥaymī with him—to die in prison there. Almost inevitably the Ṣan'ānīs fell out with al-Hādī, besieged him in the Qaṣr and, in 1276/1859-60 expelled him.

They took over all the responsibilities (*adrāk*) from the Imām's soldiers, appointing for each *darak* an *'āqil* and his group (*jamā'ah*). The Imām's representative left Ṣan'ā' and from him and others the stipends (*muqarrarāt*) were cut off as well as the delivery of the *jizyah* to them. The people appointed themselves governors of the city and the authority (*qawl*) was that of the headmen (*'uqqāl*) in the city and their chief (*kabīr*), Muḥsin Mu'īḍ. On 18 Dhu'l-Ḥijjah came the Nushūr (see p.34a) of the inhabitants of Ṣan'ā' to Nuqum and they made a proclamation (*ẓāhirah*), delivered by a *dawshān*, that they would look after themselves and that their decisions (*?akhwāḍ*) would be the responsibility of the *'uqqāl*.

There had been a great plague in the previous year and so many died that there was a shortage of burial shrouds and as many as twenty biers were blessed at a time. Intense cold destroyed crops.

The people of Ṣan'ā' now made Shaykh Muḥsin b. 'Alī Mu'īḍ their governor of the city. Muḥsin Mu'īḍ turned to negotiate with another Imām, al-Muḥsin b. Aḥmad, entitled al-Mutawakkil, who settled in the strategically important fort at Dhū Marmar where he struck coin. When they fell out with one another Imām al-Muḥsin invested and entered Ṣan'ā' by al-Khandaq al-Ghaylī (on the south) in 1284/1867-8 and took Nawbat al-Midfa' (The Tower of the Cannon). The merchant inhabitants of Ṣan'ā' collected and garrisoned the *samsarahs* and minarets (*ṣawāmi'*), rejecting the garrison (*rutbah*) of Shaykh Muḥsin (Mu'īḍ) to look after their property and themselves. However the Imām's power fell away from him and he left but Muḥsin Mu'īḍ re-entered by al-Khandaq al-Qiblī on the north of Ṣan'ā'. The two came to terms on the basis that the exercise of the *sharī'ah* and control of the *waqf* should go to the Imām while the revenues (*mawārid*) and outgoings (*mukharrajāt*) should be the responsibility of Muḥsin Mu'īḍ and him, without the Imām having the right to place obstacles in the way of them. The headman (*'āqil*) and *qāḍī* should be of the Ṣan'ānīs. Al-Muḥsin was to have the address at the Friday prayer in his name and he should have the Jum'ah.[205] They appointed Sayf al-Khilāfah, al-Sayyid 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad al-Mahdī, to (lead) the Friday Jum'ah Prayer, and he was nicknamed al-Ḥathrah (the Crumb). These events took place in 1285/1868-9.

Al-Shamāḥī[206] provides an interesting account of how the Jum'ah Prayer was performed without the physical presence of the Imām. Zaydī *fiqh*-law stipulates that for the Friday Prayer to be valid the Imām must be present. It was the responsibility of the Ḥākim (Governor) of Ṣan'ā' 'to set up an Imām for the Friday Prayer (*iqāmat Imām li-'l-Jum'ah*).' In the chaotic days of al-Ānisī, al-Ḥaymī or Muḥsin Mu'īḍ at Ṣan'ā', a group of their soldiers (*jund*) would go out with the horse, sword, umbrella, robes and drums of the Imāmate (*faras al-Imāmah wa-sayfu-hā wa-maẓallatu-hā wa-kiswatu-hā wa-ṭubūlu-hā*), and bring out the Imām. The Captain of the soldiers would invest him with the Imāmic cloak (*ḥullah*). Then he would mount the horse and go with the procession (*mawkib*) of the Imāmate to the Jāmi' where the address would be delivered in his name. Then he would be returned to his house and the life of common folk. Al-Shamāḥī comments that this ostensibly is a manifestation of the keenness of the Governor to maintain the Zaydī rite in being, but it was secretly in mockery and in aid of the *da'wah* against the Imām.[207] The temporary Imām would be a Qāsimī.

Al-Sayāghī makes of Muḥsin Mu'īḍ a hero of the people of Ṣan'ā' but this may be to exaggerate the part he played. He was, al-Sayāghī maintains, one of the *'āqils* of the city who, on being put in charge by the Ṣan'ānīs, set their affairs in order and made of them an armed defensive force which combatted the tribes surrounding their city, the Imām only having the Ṣalāt al-Jum'ah. When he stopped up Bāb Sha'ūb with burned brick (*ājur*) and the water of al-Ghayl al-Aswad was stopped by him from flowing to al-Rawḍah the tribes to the north were forced to negotiate with the Ṣan'ā' townsfolk, bringing with them sacrificial beasts (*'aqā'ir*) till they opened it again.

Of the seven tribes surrounding Ṣan'ā', Sinḥānī, Bahlūlī, Rūsī, Bustānī, Ḥushayshī, Hamdānī, Ḥārithī, and others as well, all greatly outnumbering the Ṣan'ānīs, he says,

> Into how many a tussle they [the Ṣan'ānīs] entered with Banū Bahlūl on the outskirts of Jabal Nuqum, another with the Bilād al-Rūs and Banū Bahlūl tribes in the Plain (Qā') south of Ṣan'ā', how often they plunged into the thick of violent battle with Bilād al-Bustān and Hamdān west and north of Ṣan'ā', and how many similar battles with Banu 'l-Ḥārith and Banu 'l-Ḥushaysh in Sha'ūb, Sa'wān and al-Rawḍah! At one time they would raid the animals bearing (*ḥamā'il*) their merchandise arriving from the *banādir* (ports) and brigands from these tribes would intercept them. Then they would return victorious, their urban/civilian resolution unbending, nor did the evil of wealth and luxury hold them back from daring and courage. On the contrary— they displayed strength and authority, the essential of command, and proclamations of their independence through themselves and through their *'Uqqāl* and Mashāyikh such as Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ḥaymī and Shaykh Muḥsin Mu'īḍ.

Certainly the episode of local self-government in Ṣan'ā' is one of unusual interest even if it does not merit the constructions put on it by al-Sayāghī.

Muḥsin Mu'īḍ continued in charge until the arrival of the Ottoman Turks. It is interesting to learn that he had a trading depot (*matjar*) in the well-known Samsarat al-Mīzān and that when he took over the control of Ṣan'ā' he put his head-quarters in this *samsarah*.

The Imām al-Muḥsin tried to curb the Bāṭiniyyah, the Makārimah, who had taken the opportunity of these disturbed years to take over al-Ḥaymah district.

* * *

These are the salient outlines of the age of decline of the Imāmate prior to the seizure of power by the Ottoman Turks, insofar as they affect Ṣan'ā'. Northern Yemen had reverted into an anarchy of tribal chiefdoms and little city states under various Imāms with tribal backing. Individual Imāms may have been men of quality and ability but they did not succeed in restoring stability. The sufferings of the people of Ṣan'ā' were certainly lasting and cruel. In raising men of their own to rule it looks as if they reacted against the marauding tribes and Imāms who had no other course but to mulct them through taxation. Yemeni historians usually say little of these commoners; be they merchants, shaykhs of the Sūq or of the Quarters we are not told.

204 Zaydī sources frequently refer to persons able to command the services of the Jinn. In Ḥaḍramawt there was a popular belief that Sayyid families had a special Jinnī they could summon. Imām Aḥmad was credited with similar powers.

205 Much of this section is drawn from *Ṣafaḥāt majhūlah*, 78, 116, 118, 120, and 110, 115 and al-Sayāghī's preface.

206 Op. cit., 160-1.

207 Al-Shamāḥī , though he is to be credited here, does try to read into the attitudes of Muḥsin Mu'īḍ and others a sort of ideological opposition to the Zaydī Imāms, whereas the evidence available only shows these men as *ad hoc* appointments in the general anarchy of the age.

The Arrival of the Turks in Ṣan'ā' and Second Ottoman Occupation

From the latter half of the 13th/19th century the Ottomans had once more begun to expand in Arabia and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 meant they could send troops to south Arabia by sea. Despite Tawfiq's reverse at Ṣan'ā' they had preserved their foothold on the coast. In 1287/1870 Aḥmad Mukhtār Pasha after settling 'Asīr returned to Hodeidah and the Ṣan'ānīs and other Yemenis invited him to Ṣan'ā' as they were weary of the chaos, lack of security and domination by the tribes.[208] Their desperate condition seems to have overcome memories of the cruelties of Muḥammad 'Alī's Turco-Egyptians and of the Ottomans.

Aḥmad Mukhtār mounted an expedition to Ṣan'ā' and entered it on 16 Ṣafar, 1289/15 April, 1872. Arabic sources consulted mostly skip over this quickly—perhaps the facts are not very creditable or information is simply lacking. There is no clear indication as to who was Imām—if it was al-Mutawakkil Muḥsin he was powerless to deal with the tribes around Ṣan'ā'.[209]

The Isma'īlīs[210] had gained power over Manākhah a few years before Aḥmad Mukhtār's advance into the highlands but though he had entered into pacts with them he attacked the Ismā'īlī leader west of Manākhah and murdered him when he surrendered. The Imām sent ulema and mashāyikh to meet the Ottomans at Manākhah but though at first they felt pleased at the defeat of the Ismā'īlī heretics they shuddered at the fate of the Amīr of 'Asīr and the Ismā'īlī chief who had been given safe-conducts and they recalled Ottoman treachery with the Lord of Aden in an earlier age.[211] The deputation invited Aḥmad Mukhtār to come and rid them of the rebellious tribes and then depart. He replied in Turkish—which they did not understand—and they assumed he had assented. When the Turks reached 'Aṣir village they were met by a deputation of notables, probably headed by Imām Ghālib b. Muḥammad.[212] Through the medium of the Chief (Ra'īs) of Ṣan'ā', Shaykh Muḥsin Mu'īḍ, the Pasha demanded the fortresses around the city be delivered up to him. He split his troops into two groups one of which camped at Wahb where the grave and mosque[213] of Wahb b. Munabbih are (now inside al-'Urḍī al-Sharqī), while the other garrisoned the Qaṣr, the ten gates of Ṣan'ā' and other forts.

Once the takeover was completed the Pasha demanded the tax-registers (*dafātir*) of the Imām. His ministers, secretaries and the Ashrāf advised refusal since this would enable the Pasha to understand the administration, resources and revenues of the Yemen. Coupled with his possession of the forts he would thus be enabled to take over the country—which was evidently his intention though not what the Imām, Ashrāf and Mashāyikh had asked the Sultan to do.

Muḥsin Mu'īḍ advised the Turks, in order to gain popularity, first to destroy a robber, al-Daf'ī,[214] living in a round adobe tower (*nawbah*) outside Sha'ūb—the tower was demolished and the robber executed.

Muḥsin Mu'īḍ's own fate is not uninstructive on Ottoman modes of dealing in the Yemen. He was imprisoned by Pasha Ismā'īl Ḥāfiẓ and threatened with death, but certain Ṣan'ā' merchants guaranteed to hand over 40,000 *riyāls* for him. He did not, however, recover from his fright and died. The Pasha had his house nailed up and sequestrated what he once owned.

The Pasha now Governor demanded the tax-registers again in order to become acquainted with the tithes (*'ushūr*), alleging he did not wish to govern the Yemen but only to teach the rebels a lesson.

The Pasha then commenced to form a government (*ḥukūmah*). His policy was to win over the common folk to the exclusion of the *khāṣṣah*, the aristocratic administrative class, driving out native Yemeni officials, and replacing them by Turkish *ma'mūrs*. He took over the revenues, severely restricted the incomes of the Imām and Ashrāf, prohibiting them also from mixing with chiefs of the tribes. He cut the stipends (*murattabāt*) of the Imām and Ashrāf to 3,000 *qirsh*[215] and prevented them from obtaining (Government) employment—to such an extent that the Imām and his relatives began to sell their holdings (*amlāk*).

The campaign of expansion in the north was opened with an attack on Kawkabān which surrendered after bloody battles, and on the western highlands. In July 1293/1876 another campaign was launched, this time against Arḥab and Ḥāshid—prisoners and the heads of the slain were brought into Ṣan'ā'. A truce was made and the Mashāyikh and 'Uqqāl (Headmen) of the tribes came to the Governor who presented them with gifts. Almost constant fighting with the tribes was to follow.

In 1296/1879 a new Imām, al-Hādī Sharaf al-Dīn, proclaimed himself at al-Madān of al-Ahnūm mountain and fought the Turks till his death a decade later at Sinnārah.[216]

The Rise of the Ḥamīd al-Dīn Imāms

After Imām Sharaf al-Dīn's death in 1307/1890 the ulema of his circle agreed to recognize al-Manṣūr billāh Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn as Imām. He was at that time in Ṣan'ā' where he was born in 1255/1839. Fearing the Turks knew of the invitation from Ṣa'dah he left Ṣan'ā', later to be followed by his son Yaḥyā. At Ṣa'dah he took over Sharaf al-Dīn's holdings in the Bayt al-Māl and proceeded to al-Madān of al-Ahnūm and commenced sending letters to rouse the tribes who had become impatient of the Turks. To the ulema he allotted stipends (*taqrīrāt*) of grain and money. Most of the northern tribes joined him, and, as al-Wāsi'ī puts it, his wars against the Turks would fill a book.

In 1309/1891-2 the tribes were bold enough to intercept the post from Istanbul via Hodeidah to Ṣan'ā', and to invest the city itself.[217] They would capture Turkish weapons and officers and send them to the Imām whose camp was at Qaflat 'Idhar of Ḥāshid, four days march from Ṣan'ā'. Grain prices in Ṣan'ā' rocketed and many people left. A general rising broke out in the Yemen.

208 Zabārah, *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 50, says al-Hādī Ghālib b. Muḥammad, 'Alī b. al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh and Ḥusayn b. al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad wrote to the Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz in Istanbul, asking his aid, against the 'tyrants of the tribes (*bughāt al-qabā'il*).'

209 Zabārah, *Itḥāf al-mustarshidīn*, Ṣan'ā', 1343 H, 95, says that when the Turks entered Ṣan'ā', al-Mutawakkil al-Muḥsin retired to Ḥāshid, leaving the Ṣan'ā' districts. He died in 1295/1878.

210 The Makārimah. Strothmann, in *E.I.* (1), calls them Qarmaṭīs but this is an epithet of abuse, not an exact term. The article has other errors. Tomas Gerholm, *Market, mosque and mafrag*, Stockholm, 1977, describes the area.

211 The Ṭāhirid Dāwūd, see p.69b.

212 Al-Wāsi'ī, 254, says Imām 'Alī b. al-Mahdī (not traced in biographical works), Imām Ghālib b. Muḥammad and Sayyid Ḥusayn b. al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad went out to meet them at 'Aṣir.

213 See p.311b.

214 Al-Shamāḥī, 155, calls him Shaykh Sha'ūb who held the Hamdān tribes in his hand and challenged the Turks. A hero of the resistance or a robber—perhaps he was both?

215 They made Ghālib b. Muḥammad *qā'im-maqām* of Khamir and adjacent Ḥāshid districts with a stipend of 300 *riyāls per mensem* and 100 *riyāls* for life.

216 Significantly Sharaf al-Dīn does not figure in Zabārah's *Itḥāf*, probably being omitted because of the rivalry of the house with the Ḥamīd al-Dīns. This Imām was not of the line of Zayd b. 'Alī, but descended from the 8th/14th century Imām 'Alī b. Ḥamzah, the latter a descendant of 'Alī al-Riḍā' (*A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 4). See Clive Smith, loc. cit.

217 In 1308/1891 the Turks were searching tribes entering Ṣan'ā', for security reasons in their fear of a general revolt. The tribes were lighting fires on the mountain tops from Ḥāshid to Hamdān, Arḥab and al-Rawḍah. The Turks impounded the camels of the Badū coming to the city from Mashriq loaded with salt and used them to carry the baggage of troops moving from Ṣan'ā' to 'Amrān.

Aḥmad Fayḍi/Fayzī, a former governor, was sent back with reinforcements to restore order in the Yemen. He relieved Ṣan'ā' and campaigned vigorously against the tribes. When he came to Qaflat 'Idhar the Imām withdrew to the mountains and settled in al-Ahnūm—I stayed in the great fort which he built there on my 1964 journey. Aḥmad Fayḍī recovered the Turkish prisoners from the tribes by bribery or by force. Turkish armaments were far superior to those of the tribes who used the old Arab *bunduqs* except when they captured modern weapons from the Turks.

Al-Wāsi'ī avers that about 70,000[218] tribesmen from the Maghrib and Mashriq of the Yemen were at the siege of Ṣan'ā'. They constructed ladders at Ḥaddah to assault the walls manned by the Turks. The tribes around the city walls shouted out their intention to plunder the *ḍu'afā'* and *masākin*, the unarmed inhabitants, non-combatants, believing that the townsfolk were assisting the Turks notwithstanding the oppression and wrong they were suffering at their hands. 'But, by God's grace to the *ḍu'afā'* and *masākīn'*, says al-Wāsi'ī 'their lives and property were saved.' The Turks for their part thought the townsfolk were implicated in stirring up the tribes and regarded them as 'miserable rogues and Arabs'—so the poor folk came between two fires. It was their custom to pray in all the mosques, reciting the Qur'ān and sūrat Yā-sīn between the two Evening Prayers and after the Friday Prayer. They suffered from lack of food but those quitting Ṣan'ā' thinking to 'go out from darkness to light', were plundered by tribesmen of all they had, while if they came across a woman they assaulted her honour. The Imām and chiefs of the troops (*ajnād*) were helpless to check these excesses of the tribes. So the arrival of Aḥmad Fayḍī was greeted with joy by the Ṣan'ānīs and he was welcomed by the chiefs (*ru'asā'*) of the Arabs and Shaykh 'Alī al-Bilaylī.[219] The Turkish governor after breaking the siege ordered a general amnesty.

Nevertheless, again in 1311/1893-4, the townsfolk could see signal fires (*tanāṣīr*) at night near the Qaṣr of Ṣan'ā' and Mount Nuqum overlooking the city on the east and 'Aṣir overlooking it on the west, and hear the sound of rifle fire.

In 1309/1891 the Porte sent an emissary to Ṣan'ā', directed to Imām al-Manṣūr, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Rifā'ī, a Syrian Muftī of Ḥamāh, who wrote the Imām a threatening and cajoling letter, then a Yemeni Sayyid who had become the Sultan's aide-de-camp (*yāwir*).[220] The Imām's replies to both differ little, but the second letter[221] dated 25 Rabī' II, 1309/28 November, 1891, defines the Zaydī position in the following terms. Government of the Yemen, says the Imām, was in the hands of our forebears of the Pure Family (*al-'Itrat al-Zakiyyah*), the Prophet's House, acting by God's Book and the *Sunnah* of God's Apostle, enjoining right and forbidding the unseemly, maintaining the (canonical) punishments (*ḥudūd*) and retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) and taking the *kharāj*-tax of the land justly. Since the Yemenis voluntarily accepted Islam in the Prophet's time they are only liable to pay *zakāt* and *fiṭrah*. 'When the soldiers of the victorious Sultanate arrived accompanied by good expectations (of the Yemenis) of the Sultan[222] of Islam, it did not occur to the mind of any creature that they would rule by aught other than what God had revealed nor would they do what God has forbidden, nor go beyond the bounds by acting unjustly to God's servants, nor would they close the pilgrimage to God's House'.[223]

The Imām accuses the Turks of open fornication and sodomy (*al-zinā wa-'l-liwāṭ*) so that they seem lawful, while wines have become like cool water, till children are corrupted. The *ra'āyā* are oppressed, the say (*kalimah*) of Judaism and Christianity has gained high standing, inviolable Muslim graves have been destroyed and walls and *khānāt* built with stone from them.[224] Statutes (*qāwānīn*) have been imposed which have abolished (the distinction) between unlawful and lawful in order to seize property, to the extent that a farmer would consent to hand over his entire crop but it would not be accepted from him.[225] The letter also inveighs against the tobacco monopoly.[226]

The Imām's letter along with a memorandum (*maḍbaṭah*) embodying the complaints of abuses from the Mashāyikh of Ṣan'ā' and the Mashāyikh of the Tribes, was sent to Istanbul.

In addition to the above al-Wāsi'ī[227] cites as causes of the revolt that 'each *qā'im-maqām* and other *ma'mūrs*,[228] when they go out to any province (*qaḍā*) or district (*nāḥiyah*) to collect tithes (*a'shār*) takes what he can for himself, without helping to write the voucher (*sanad*) for what he has received from them. Then the Government comes back and declares they have paid nothing. Then the Government orders them to be plundered and their houses destroyed and burned. When the regular army (*'askar niẓām*) arrives in a village it assaults the womenfolk, the *ma'mūrs* affecting that the Yemenis are rogues[229] and their rite/school (*madhhab*) is Zaydī.' Al-Wāsi'ī goes on to say that the Turks do not comprehend that Zaydism is one of the (orthodox) schools and that 'we are commanded to follow the guidance of the Imām Zayd b. 'Alī and his Family.' While the Turks consider us seceders from Islam yet they do not pray while the Yemenis do, adhering to the *sharī'ah* as well.

In justice to the Turks it must be pointed out that some of these reproaches can often enough be applied to Yemenis as previous pages show, but of course they seemed the more reprehensible in a foreign Muslim like the Turk.

The Turks about this time started building a ring of forts around Ṣan'ā' for its defence. The worst offence in Ottoman eyes was now to correspond with or visit the Imām and a number of Sayyids, Faqīhs and Mashāyikh who did so were packed off to exile in Rhodes where some married but eventually returned.[230]

In 1311/1894 came the first attempts to blow up houses with gunpowder—in Bīr al-'Azab an official's dwelling and in the Ṣan'ā' Maydan west of Jāmi' al-Bakīriyyah, that of the Ḥākim al-Ḥanafiyyah, the Turkish rite/school being Ḥanafī. The Sharī'ah Court even was later blown up. South of Ḥammām al-Maydān the telegraph wires were cut. Patrols had to try to prevent the telegraph wires outside Ṣan'ā' being cut which led to a shortage of men in the garrison so the Pasha ordered both Khanādiq and Bāb al-Sitrān to be closed. The Post and Telegraphs Office (*Dā'irat al-Barq wa-'l-Barīd*) was also blown up. Houses of Yemenis collaborating with the Turks followed and in 1312/1894 an attempt was made on Ismā'īlīs of Najrān Yām lodged near Masjid al-Ḥumaydī north of Bāb al-Yaman.[231] Precautions were therefore taken by the Turks to double the number of watch-cabins (*maḥārīs*)[232] in the streets and lanes. Lighting with oil-lamps (*fawānīs*) was also introduced. When a blowing-up took place in a quarter (*ḥārah*) of Ṣan'ā' the Turks would imprison those living in the neighbourhood. An attempt by al-Manṣūr's supporters to set alight the houses of certain *ma'mūrs* using

218 Probably not all at once since tribesmen come and go.
219 For al-Bilaylī see p.98a.
220 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 52 seq. He complained, *inter alia* that al-Manṣūr had been writing to the tribes.
221 Ibid, 65, seq.
222 It will be remarked that he is called Sultan, not Caliph, and al-Rifā'ī's letter addresses al-Manṣūr as Sayyid, not Imām.
223 Ibid, II, 161, al-Manṣūr, in 1313/1895-6, complains of the stopping of pilgrims to God's House in the name of the Quarantine which is under Christian charge. He avers this is to make Muslims doubt about their religion.
224 The encroachments on Khuzaymah Cemetery?
225 In the case of arrears of taxes?
226 See p.177a.
227 Op. cit., 271.
228 There were *mulūki* and *'askarī ma'mūrs*.
229 Al-Wāsi'ī says that the Turks called anyone who had correspondence with the Imām a rogue (*shaqiyy*).
230 In 1321/1903 about eighty Yemenis were sent to Istanbul to study in Sultanic schools (*makātib*)—few ever returned.
231 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 163.
232 See p.148a.

gunpowder in 1347/1899-1900 was forestalled by an informer. In point of fact the conduct of the *ma'mūrs* was often extremely bad and Fayḍī is recorded as giving his *ma'mūrs* a dressing down for their maltreatment of the Yemenis without abiding by the laws (*qawānīn*).

Two examples of how the Turks alienated Yemenis may be cited. Due to the overbearing treatment by the Turks, their oppression (*ẓulm*) and 'treating them like others' (i.e. not with the special position enjoyed by Sayyids in the Ottoman Empire as well as elsewhere), the influential Āl Wazīr left their *hijrah* at the top of Wādi 'l-Sirr to settle in the Jawf. They wrote to the Imām who assigned them subsistence (*kifāyāt*)[233] there. Zabārah alludes to the seizure of women and children prisoners from Arḥab when their menfolk had escaped them, regarded by the Yemeni tribes as a shameful act.

> Never have we heard of taking prisoner
> Women or infants or *burqu'*-wearer.

Of all Ottoman Governors of the Yemen Zabārah says that Ḥusayn Ḥilmī Pasha was the most outstanding and astute. He attempted to settle the country by reforms in taxation in which he aimed at eliminating both native Yemeni and Turkish abuses. In 1317/1899 he made a tour of inspection, mainly south of Ṣan'ā', to regulate the *zakawāt*-taxes[234] and other Government demands of the *ra'iyyah*, from which he resolved to exclude intervention of the Mashāyikh.

Among Ḥusayn Ḥilmī's more important reforms in fact was his elimination of the Mashāyikh from the collection of revenues (*taḥṣīl al-amwāl*) and *zakawāt* on crops. He appointed assessors in every district (*nāḥiyah*) and each village was required to elect a person from itself who would co-operate with the Government appointed assessor (*khāriṣ*) to assess what each villager should pay. The assessment had to be agreed and the individual informed as to the amount of his assessment and the assessment written down by the clerk with the assessor. If the Government agent (here called *'adl*) and the peasants' representative (*amīn al-ra-'iyyah*) disagreed then the chosen (?) inspector (*al-kāshif al-mukhtār*) was to be sent to settle the matter. Each individual then 'drove' what he owed directly to the Government Magazine (Mikhzān al-Ḥukūmah) or by intermediary of the trusted headman (*al-'āqil al-amīn*). A mobile column (*ṭābūr sayyār*) of local gendarmerie 'Zaptieh' (*al-Ḍabṭiyyah al-'Arab*)[235] was made responsible for collecting arrears (*bawāqī*) from the *ra'iyyah*, the intention being to prevent the regulars (*al-Niẓām*) and their harsh leaders from intervening, and the *ma'mūrs* from receiving bribes. Bribery which had been the means (*hamzat al-waṣl*) to obtain Government appointments (*waẓā'if*) was to be severely punished, and many corrupt or harsh officials were dismissed. Ḥusayn Ḥilmī took a tough line with sympathisers of the Imām or those who had the slightest link with him and would order the police to assault his house and take away any papers, imprisoning such persons without proof in the Qaṣr.[236] He maintained spies to look for adherents of the Imām, thereby doing the Imām and his group much harm. On one occasion he took forty men of the tribes and others whom he suspected of sympathising with Imām al-Manṣūr and packed them off to Tripoli. He tried to destroy the Zaydī school/rite by secret methods which caused it much severer damage than did Aḥmad Fayḍī and his men whose sole object was bribes and amassing wealth. Ḥusayn Ḥilmī's 'hatchet man' was his Chief of Police, notorious for his atrocities in his time and that of his successor 'Abdullāh Pasha and those who followed him.

One of the recurrent crises caused by failure of the summer rains struck the Yemen in Rabī' II, 1321/July, 1903, some wells in the Ṣan'ā' district ran dry and the Ṣan'ānīs used to ask God's forgiveness in the mosques after the prayers and they would go out to the Jabbānah to pray for rain (*li-'l-istisqā'*).[237] This resulted in high grain prices, a severe famine and a shortage of grain in Ṣan'ā' except for the maize (*dhurah Hindiyyah*),[238] flour and rice which merchants used to import from Hodeidah and Aden, or the grain buried in the *madfan*-silos of the Bayt al-Māl by command of the Imām in those parts of the north under his control. A *qadaḥ* of this grain released from store rose to six *riyāls* and imported flour sold at 2 *ṣā'* for a *riyāl*. Locust depredations, as so frequently in the histories, were also reported. Let it be said that already during the Ottoman régime the Yemen even in years of plenty was importing over £100,000 worth of foodstuffs annually, so it looks as if it was not self-sufficient in this way.

When Ḥusayn Ḥilmī was replaced by 'Abdullāh Pasha[239] and his strong hand removed, bribery and oppression returned, says al-Wāsi'ī, but some building was done in Ṣan'ā' in his day.

The Death of Imām al-Manṣūr and Rise of Imām al-Mutawakkil Yaḥyā b. al-Manṣūr Ḥamīd al-Dīn (1322-1367/1904-1948)

In Rabī' I, 1322/May-June, 1904 al-Manṣūr died at Qaflat 'Idhar—it was he who revived the glory of the house of al-Qāsim after the slide of the Imāmate into disintegration. Among the measures he took of which Zabārah[240] approves were doles (*taqrīrāt*) of grain to students of religion (*muhājirūn*) and maintenance (*maṣrūf*) for ulema. He put a stop to Ṭāghūt-law[241] in most northern districts (*bilād al-qiblah*), restored *awqāf*[242] and books belonging to the *waqf*, brought back to the Bayt al-Māl Treasury estates[243] which had been misappropriated, gave stipends (*taqrīrāt*) to children's teachers, widows and orphans, they having been divided out among the Sayyids, the inhabitants of Shahārah and others, in the northern districts. In some places he built forts. Apart from his struggles with the Turks al-Manṣūr had not infrequently to fight opponents to his rule in the north itself.

At Qaflat 'Idhar the ulema of the Ṣan'ā' district, with those present from Dhamār and Ṣa'dah, assembled and, under some pressure from Nāṣir b. Mabkhūt al-Aḥmar of Ḥāshid[244]—who is said to have locked them up in their conference room, saying '*Mā bish ghayr Sīdī Yaḥyā*, No one else but Sīdī Yaḥyā',—they elected al-Manṣūr's only son Yaḥyā who assumed the title al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh.[245] Some ulema not present refused him allegiance (*mubāya'ah*) at first, but eventually agreed. His *da'wah* is dated 20 Rabī I, 1322/4 June, 1904.[246] It is noteworthy that the Sharaf al-Dīn family of Kawkabān came to pay its respects, as did delegations from Ḥāshid, Ḥajūr, al-Ahnūm, Shahārah and Sufyān.

Yaḥyā was indeed one of the great Imāms,[247] even if he was

233 *Kifāyāt*, explained by Aḥmad al-Shāmi as *ṣarf yawmī, naqd wa-ḥubūb*, money and grain.
234 Tax on crops etc., *al-mukhaḍḍar* fruit and vegetables, *al-naḥl* bees, *al-mawāshī* cattle, sheep-and-goats, camels.
235 G. Wyman Bury, *Arabia Infelix*, London, 1915, 189, has a good account of the Zaptieh.
236 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 312.
237 See 'The cultivation of cereals in mediaeval Yemen', *Arabian studies*, I, 32, for ceremonies near Ṣan'ā'.
238 Called locally *hund*, and elsewhere *Rūmi* or *Ḥabashi*.
239 There is some confusion over 'Abdullāh Pasha and Ḥilmī which could doubtless be resolved by reference to the Ottoman Archives. 'Abdullāh was deputy (*wakīl*) to Ḥilmī and there was jealousy between them. Zabārah, op. cit., (2), II, 378, says definitely that Ḥilmī was deposed in 1320/1902 but other sources seem to indicate 1318/1900-1.
240 Op. cit., (2), I, 404.
241 Ṭāghūt is the customary law of the tribes. See C. Rathjens, 'Tâghût gegen 'sherî'a. Gewohnheitsrecht und islamisches Recht bei den Galiben des jemenitischen Hochlandes', *Jhb. des Linden-Museums*, Stuttgart, 1951, 172-87.
242 Lands or their revenues misappropriated.
243 *Qaṭa' al-qita'* means assignment of pieces (of *waqf* land).
244 *Handbook of Yemen*, prepared by the Arab Bureau, Cairo, January 15th, 1917 (Secret), states Yaḥyā was married to Nāṣir's sister but it was his foster-sister.
245 He struck on his coins '*Iṣmati billāh al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh.*'
246 Al-Wāsi'ī, 299, gives lists of persons present at the occasion.
247 A ms. biography of Yaḥyā exists but was not available—Yaḥyā certainly merits a full length study.

notoriously close-fisted with money. He was born in Ṣan'ā' in Rabī' I, 1286/July, 1869 and grew up there, studying with his father. He followed him from Ṣan'ā' in 1307/1890, seeking protection (*muhājir*). During his long exile from the capital he never ceased to take a close interest in its internal affairs, especially in matters of law and religion.

Tribal Mashāyikh and soldiers (*ajnād*)[248] began to flock in to Imām Yaḥyā from all over the Yemen, and he gave the order to the tribes to besiege Turkish held towns, and all but Hodeidah were invested by them. Perhaps his cause was helped by the famine. The tribes massed around Ṣan'ā' were supplied by the Imām with grain from the Bayt al-Māl, but in general people were dying and farmers were leaving their land because of the lack of rain and the disturbances. At this time deaths in Qaryat al-Qābil of Ḍahr alone were reckoned at 1,600.[249] So severe were conditions in Ṣan'ā' that great and small, even secluded women left it. People sold their possessions at rock-bottom prices—a man would hire a porter to carry something to the Sūq but find no buyer and having no money to pay the porter's hire, the porter would take half of what he had been carrying.

The Muftī ordered the police and some of the soldiery to break into the houses of merchants, notables or anyone of apparent affluence and confiscate the grain in them for the soldiers—in those days, says al-Wāsi'ī, all houses baked their own bread and there were no public bread-ovens (*afrān*).[250] The police broke into many houses, seized what they found, smashed doors and humiliated the inmates. During the operation some of the *ma'mūrs* were openly drinking wine. Any animal they found the soldiers impounded, cows, camels, sheep, poultry, asses and horses—which they slaughtered and ate—as the siege grew worse they ate dogs and cats—but even then many soldiers died of starvation.

The Hodeidah merchants imported grain by steamer from Abyssinia and the Sudan, but the Imām kept dispensing grain to his supporters and this must have helped his cause. Ten towns surrendered to the Arabs.

Prices of grain in Ṣan'ā' rose to a quarter *ṣā'* equivalent to a Yemen *nafar*[251] for a *riyāl*, then mounted to one and a half *riyāls*. Once two *ṣā'* of bread fetched 27 *riyāls*. For a *qadaḥ*[252] of grain 600 *riyāls* were paid. These prices may be compared with a soldier's pay of five *riyāls* a month plus a grain allowance between the two World Wars. Infants were dumped in the streets to die for lack of food to feed them and a case of cannibalism is mentioned.

At the height of the siege a deputation of Turkish officers with a learned Sayyid left the city for Kawkabān to surrender to the Imām there. They consented to hand it over with the arms and ammunition (*dhakhā'ir*) it contained, including 70 pieces of artillery. The Imām sent Sayf al-Islām Aḥmad b. Qāsim Ḥamīd al-Dīn to receive the surrender and himself moved to Qaryat al-Qābil. After the surrender the tribes dispersed.[253]

The populace were enraged with the Muftī, Qāḍī Muḥammad Jaghmān for his actions during the siege, and though he was under escort of the Imām's soldiers they spat at him and cursed him. Jaghmān, happening to meet the Imām emerging from the Friday Prayer, sought his protection—which the Imām granted; he pardoned what Jaghmān had done to his father and to himself but added that the *sharī'ah* would deal with any claims the Ṣan'ānī people had against him. Under the Turkish rule in Ṣan'ā' Jaghmān had guards on his house and in the street, but he was now able to walk abroad freely. In his clemency (*ḥilm*) the Imām, always a respecter of learning, allotted him food and a stipend—an action much admired, but, says al-Wāsi'ī, Jaghmān did not learn his lesson and wrote secretly to the Turks at Manākhah.

The tribes in the elation of victory wanted the Imām to grant them districts the taxes (*wājibāt*) of which they might exploit for themselves, and Ṣan'ā' was in a poor state with its sūqs devastated. Yet even while the city was beseiged Aḥmad Faydī had been made Governor for a third term. Arriving at Hodeidah he went up to Manākhah and the tribes massed to besiege him there. Jaghmān corresponded with Faydī, urging him to hurry on to Ṣan'ā' and reviling the Imām. The Jaghmān faction in Ṣan'ā' included, among others, the Dā'ī of the Ismā'īlīs, for Yām had been supporting the Turks against their hereditary foes the Zaydī Imāms. This correspondence was intercepted by the Imām who packed them all off to the north as prisoners. Yaḥyā's position was uncertain and he had serious political problems.

After heavy fighting and accompanied by large reinforcements Faydī reached 'Aṣir village on the western edge of Ṣan'ā' plain and the Imām had no alternative but to withdraw north to Ḥāshid country.

Faydī proclaimed an amnesty in Ṣan'ā' and re-established order, but people returning to the city found that houses there and shops in the Sūq had been destroyed. Half the population is thought to have perished. There had been 400 *qashshāms* engaged as well-workers (*sānī*)—only about twenty were left. No less than thirty *qashshāms* were employed at the Jāmi' Mosque, but after the siege only five infants survived. So today, says al-Wāsi'ī, all the *qashshāms* are new.[254]

Faydī followed up the Imām to the mountain top city of Shahārah but failed to take it. My impressions in 1964 were that it is next to impregnable, and I was shown a battery of Turkish guns with their limbers said to have been captured from the Turks.

Time and again, travellers in the Ottoman Empire remark on the long arrears of the troops' pay and their ragged uniforms—Harris even sketched a Turkish soldier who had only one boot.[255] Disorders for this reason broke out in 1324/1906 when the *ma'mūrs* in the Posts and Telegraphs demanding their pay (*ma'āshāt*) along with some Turkish troops, mainly Syrian Arabs wanting their leave, mutinied at Farwah b. Musayk Mosque and in a matter of ten minutes had looted the Sha'ūb area. They went on to the Jāmi' Mosque, drove out the Mashāyikh al-Qur'ān, students and others, closed all but one of its ten doors, mounting a guard there and at the ends of the streets leading to the Jāmi'. They stayed there for a fortnight till the Governor acceded to their demands and the Syrian Radīf troops enlisted for a limited period of service returned home. In Hodeidah also a similar mutiny broke out.

Constantinople now tried a peace mission to Yaḥyā; though it failed, Yaḥyā's proposed terms are revealing. The law to be applied in the Yemen is the *sharī'ah*, the appointment and dismissal of *qāḍīs* and judges and the administration of the Awqāf must return to the Imām. The Imām would punish bribery. Turkish officials would have salaries appropriated to them so that poverty would not drive them to accepting bribes. Tithes on crops and taxes on animals should be collected according to the *sharī'ah*, collection being made through the Mashāyikh of the country supervised by Ottoman *ma'mūrs*. The Imām would have no truck with Mīrī taxes. The Imām's supporters, the Ḥāshid, Khawlān, Ḥadā and Arḥab tribes were to pay *no* taxes (*takālīf*) while the officials of Ānis should be appointed by the Imām alone. Non-Muslims, i.e. Christians and Jews, were not to be put over Muslims—these prescriptions were to apply even in Ṣan'ā' and Ta'izz and to the employees of the Ottomans also.

248 Tribesmen engaging as soldiers.

249 Al-Wāsi'ī, 300.

250 In later Turkish times there was a mill at Ḥaddah which still exists.

251 See p.188a, n. 141.

252 Al-Wāsi'ī calls the *qadaḥ* twice a full *tanakah/ṣafiḥah* (of paraffin). See p. 188a, n. 141.

253 A first-hand account of the siege is E. de Leone, 'L' assedio e la resa di Ṣan'ā' del 1905 attraverso il carteggio inedito di Giuseppe Caprotti', *Oriente Moderno*, Roma, 1956, XXXVI, 61-81. The Municipality in March undertook to deal with the dead lying in the streets and provide for their burial. Even water became scarce as the animals to draw it from the wells had been killed for food. Merchants were made to disgorge their stores of flour. The taxes on animals, houses and persons, had excited the revolt. Op. cit., 303.

254 Op. cit., 303.

255 W. B. Harris, *A journey through the Yemen*, London, 1893, 317. Cf. G. Wyman Bury, 179.

Fighting in Khawlān, Anis and other districts continued but the Sultan sent yet another mission to Ṣan'ā', composed of notable ulema of Mecca who wrote urging the Imām to make peace. The Imām protested that the Turks had been attacking the Ahl al-Bayt, stigmatising them as Rāfiḍīs and Khārijīs—to both of which groups (ranging from anti-Shī'ah to extreme Shī'ah) Zaydīs are opposed, and he objected to Turkish subsidising of the Ismā'īlīs. He complained that the Turks had forced up the hire of animals by their frequent commandeering their services without payment to the owners. The *ma'mūrs*, he complained, were forever misrepresenting the situation and only allowed Yemeni 'stooges' to speak to visiting inspectors from Istanbul who tell them what the *ma'mūrs* want them to hear, while the Imām's letters to the Sultan never receive an answer.

Ḥasan Taḥsīn who succeeded Fayḍī in 1326/1908 sensibly left the Imām's territory alone and the Imām on his part kept to his own territory. A stream of litigants from all over the Yemen repaired to the Imām to settle their cases by the *sharī'ah* not the Ottoman *Qānūn*—Yaḥyā actually appointed *ḥākims* in areas controlled by the Turks to deal with cases by *sharī'ah*; he even appointed Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-'Amrī to act in this capacity in Ṣan'ā'. A deputation of notables invited to Istanbul for conversations failed because those in Turkish employ quarrelled with the others. A later attempt to induce the Imām to send representatives there foundered on the demand that the statutory *sharī'ah* punishments (*ḥudūd*) replace the Ottoman *Qānūn*—which, said the Turks, would upset their other vilayets.

In 1327/1909 the Committee of Union and Progress deposed Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd but the Young Turk revolution seems to have made little difference to the Yemen. A new governor was however appointed in 1910, Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, who believed in a tough policy. His arrogance provoked the Imām in January 1911, to rouse the tribes to besiege Ṣan'ā' and all Turkish centres. The new Pasha locked the city gates to stop people leaving it and put police patrols in the streets which beat up groups they came across in conversation. If they happened on a light in the upper storeys of a house they beat and imprisoned the owner on the pretext that he was signalling to the tribes outside to assault the city. The Governor wanted to execute fifty prominent ulema and merchants but the Turkish Nā'ib of the Sharī'ah Court refused to shed Muslim blood without a legal judgement. With police arresting people in the street, the sūqs mostly shut down and the mosques filled with persons taking refuge with nothing else to do but study the Qur'ān from dawn to the Evening Prayer! The Governor then imposed a levy on Ṣan'ā' of 70,000 *riyāls*. He commanded the houses adjoining Sha'ūb and those in the Ṣāfiyah to be demolished, and he had mines planted around the city, but the tribes menacing the city gingerly dug them up, as they did when mines were planted by Egyptian forces in 1962-67.

A young British officer, A. J. B. Wavell,[256] has left an informed inside account of conditions. At first there was no shortage of food. Lamp oil got scarce and the Jews who had cornered it refused to sell except at an enormous profit. The Governor had a short interview with them and it was then forthcoming at a reasonable price! Wavell comments however that they got even with the Turks by putting up the price of *'araq* (mastic)—to which, as it was unlawful to Muslims, the Turks could not reasonably object. The *majīdiyyah* (a twenty piastre piece), that the Arabs would only accept in the towns, depreciated sharply against the *riyāl*[257]—normally 10-11 piastres to the *riyāl* it dropped at the loss of 'Aṣir fort, to 19 piastres. As the Imām offered seventy dollars for each Millī head (the Millah were irregular Arab troops raised by the Turks) most of them deserted, but the gendarmerie mostly remained loyal to the Turks.

Wavell's account shows clearly how delighted the Ṣan'ānīs were when Aḥmad 'Izzat Pasha, sent to replace Muḥammad 'Alī relieved the city on 5 April, 1911, again after hard fighting. The tribes Dhū Muḥammad and Dhū Ḥusayn were particularly notorious with the townsfolk for their ignorance and violence. At Ibb their chief tried to stop them from looting and murdering and confine themselves to besieging the Turks, giving quarter to Arabs or Turks leaving the town, but his harangues had absolutely no effect. The tale is told that in their ignorance they tried to eat tablets of Indian soap but left sugar-loaf (*sukkar al-ra's*),[258] saying it was gun ammunition.

The Ṣan'ānīs came to complain to 'Izzat Pasha of the previous Governor but Turkish policy now took a change of direction. The Pasha perceived the difficulties of the military situation and set out to effect a rapprochement between the Imām and the Ottoman Government, sending to the Imām at Shahārah the President of the Court of Appeal, Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-'Amrī and Sayyid Qāsim of the Abū Ṭālib house.

In the autumn of 1911 news arrived from Istanbul of the Italian attack on Tripoli. 'Izzat Pasha ordered the people to assemble in the Jāmi' Mosque where he addressed them, asking that in the face of this danger dissensions between Muslims should cease. Shortly after this the Imām sent to him agreeing to a truce and appointing Da"ān, five hours north west of 'Amrān as their rendez-vous. The Imām arrived escorted by thousands of tribesmen chanting *zāmils*[259] and popping off their rifles. 'Izzat Pasha arrived with his Turkish and Arab Chiefs of Staff. They concluded together the famous Treaty of Da"ān and, although the Turkish Parliament rejected it and 'Izzat Pasha had to go in person to Istanbul to press his views, it was ratified by an Imperial *firmān* dated September 22, 1913. 'Izzat Pasha left the Yemen but under the new Governor Maḥmūd Nadīm Bey the agreement was loyally observed by both sides.

By the Da"ān Treaty the Yemen was split into two administrative regions—the Zaydī region with its towns, including also Ḥarāz and Ta'izz—to all these the Imām was to appoint Zaydī *ḥukkām* (governors) and have control of the Waqf—and the Shāfi'ī region administered by direct Turkish rule. The crucial central issue of law was resolved by the re-adoption of the *sharī'ah* for the districts controlled by the Imām while the Turkish Government retained the right to appoint the *sharī'ah* judges (*ḥukkām al-shar'*) of non-Yemenis in the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī districts. An Appeal Court (Maḥkamat al-Isti'nāf) was formed to scrutinise complaints; its president and members were to be selected by the Imām, but ratified by the Turkish Government. Cases of Zaydīs versus Shāfi'īs were to appear before a mixed court formed of members of both schools.[260]

Any Mīrī taxes were to be levied in accordance with the *shar'*. A British source[261] says that 'octroi and transit duties were abolished', but adds that there were, when collected, 'market dues (ten per cent) on all produce sold, one Turkish piastre for every goat slaughtered and ten Turkish piastres for every bullock.'[262] Customs dues continued to be charged at the ports. Arḥab and Khawlān, because of the poverty and destruction caused by the fighting there, were to pay no Mīrī taxes for ten years and Ānis was to have no taxes (*jibāyāt al-amwāl*) for the same period. The Imām was to pay a tenth of his revenue (*ḥāṣilāt*) to the Turkish Government.

On the political side the Imām was to release the hostages (*rahā'in*) from Ṣan'ā' and its district held by him as well as those from Ḥarāz (Ismā'īlīs) and 'Amrān.

These are the more important provisions of the Da"ān Treaty in summary. On September 22, 1913, 'Izzat Pasha commanded the Ṣan'ānīs to assemble in the Maydān and he announced the

256 A. J. B. Wavell, *A modern pilgrim in Mecca and a siege in Sanaa*, London, 1912, 260 seq. See infra, 115b.
257 For the *riyāl* see notes on pp.1836, n.54, 308 seq.
258 This cone-shaped sugar was still used with tea in Ḥaḍramawt in 1948.
259 The well known tribal chants which accompany all ceremonial occasions.
260 In practice the two sects do not seem to differ much.
261 *Handbook of Yemen*, 42, Wyman Bury, op. cit., 18.
262 Wyman Bury, 131.

terms of the Treaty to them, the most important being the substitution of the *sharī'ah* for the Ottoman *Qānūn*.[263] They were then addressed by the Government *muftī*. 'Izzat assigned stipends (*ma'āshāt*) to the Ḥāshid and Arḥab chiefs and to certain persons of Ṣan'ā' as well for political reasons but some ulema refused to accept them. The Imām was to draw L.T. 1,000 *per mensem* for himself and L.T. 1,500 for 'his vassals'.[264]

A new personality now entered the political arena in the religious leader Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Idrīsī, a grandson of the founder of the Idrīsī *ṭarīqah* (of which the Sanūsīs are an offshoot). Encouraged by Italian intrigue, if we are to believe al-Barakātī,[265] he gained ascendancy in most of 'Asīr, though a combined force of the Mecca Sharīfs and the Turks took Abhā from him in 1911. During the Italo-Turkish War that broke out in the latter part of that year the Italians blockaded the coastal ports of western Arabia and supplied the Idrīsī with money and arms—this blockade was to cause the Hodeidah merchants much loss. In spring, 1912, the Idrīsī showed his enmity to the Imām and the Turks and, with Italian money seduced the Tihāmah districts to himself.[266] This led to troubles in Khawlān al-Shām and Rāziḥ, but Sayf al-Islām Muḥammad al-Hādī took up arms against the dissidents. In early 1913 the Turks tried to persuade him to become a governor under Imām Yaḥyā but he refused. The Idrīsīs were to cause the Imām much trouble till their eclipse in 1926.

At this point it seems appropriate to digress and say a little about the al-Aḥmar family, the *kabīrs* of Ḥāshid who have played a prominent role in Yemeni politics for the last eighty years or more, and their name figures from time to time before this. Originally *'fuqarā' 'ilm'*, scholars, they have become Mashāyikh of the 'Uṣaymāt of the Ḥāshid federation and are known as *hijrat Ḥāshid*—they made them *muhajjar* and their *hijrah* is Khamir and al-Qaflah near Shahārah. Nāṣir b. Mabkhūt al-Aḥmar who had supported the Imām in his early struggles with the Turks, had his chief strongholds at Khamrī, Ḥabūr and Ẓafir. In disgust at the Imām's compact with the Turks he deserted to the Idrīsī in 1912, and, still in 1911, was joined by 'Abdullāh b. Juzaylān of Bakīl. In 1913 he was fighting for the Idrīsī against Imām Yaḥyā, and though he joined the Imām in 1914, he again became disaffected in early 1917 and in league with the Idrīsī and the Yām tribes. It is alleged that the reason for his break with the Imām in 1912 was the acknowledgement in the Da"ān Treaty that Mīrī should eventually be paid to the Turks. When Ḥāshidī tribesmen went to fight for the Idrīsī it was to get money out of him, and they said to the Imām, *'Shā nirmī ṭālī'*, We'll shoot in the air!' Opposed to Nāṣir Mabkhūt tribes were Ahnūm, traditionally loyal to the Ḥamīd al-Dīn, 'Āhim, Ẓulaymah, Banī Surayḥ and Arḥab. The al-Aḥmar house has remained at loggerheads with the Ḥamīd al-Dīn. Imām Yaḥyā at an earlier stage married Nāṣir b. Mabkhūt's foster-sister, the Sharīfah Ḥūriyyah, daughter of Sayf al-Islām Aḥmad al-Mutawakkil.

Reverting to the years immediately preceding World War I, Maḥmūd Nadīm Bey, a Syrian, energetic and a good administrator, replaced 'Izzat Pasha[267] as Governor. After Da"ān however Turkish power notably deteriorated as the accounts of British travellers show, but during the war years there was no major internal trouble. In towns such as Ṣan'ā', travellers remark that the substitution of the *sharī'ah* punishments for wine drinking and fornication was not popular.

The shortages caused by the bad rains of early 1914 were met by imports of flour and grain from India, Ethiopia and the Sudan, but the situation improved later in the year. The outbreak of World War I cut off the steamers but though kerosene and sugar soon ran out (except a sort of sugar in the Lower Yemen) grain and honey were plentiful throughout the war years.

Though he did not love the Turks the Imām, 'in November 1915 wrote a complimentary letter to Enver, praying for the success of the Ottoman armies.' It is interesting to note that he sent emissaries to attempt to win over Aden protected areas like Ḥaḍramawt and the 'Awlaqī tribes.

In early 1915 General 'Alī Sa'īd Pasha marched out of Ṣan'ā' with Turkish troops and Arab volunteers to attack Aden. Paolo Costa and the writer met an old man at Ghayl al-Barmakī who had watched them marching down the road from Ṣan'ā' with guns, horses, infantry, some sixty years before—a fine sight. They defeated a small British force at Lahej which they plundered utterly; the Ṣan'ā' merchants who had much property there lost it all.

But, as Colonel Jacob[268] says, 'The sands had run out . . . . On the declaration of the Armistice, Turkish forces surrendered to us, some at Aden and others in the Red Sea, both at Hodeida and at Luhaiya. Ali Sa'id Pasha's entry into Aden took the form of a triumphal procession. Crowds met and cheered him. He had fought with clean hands. He had always held his own.'

For the Turks, as later for Nasser, the Yemen adventure was costly, wasteful and pointless. They have left a reputation for toughness and courage. Old men not infrequently speak well of them, especially those who served with them like the two old *tubanjīs* (gunners) the writer talked with in Shahārah in 1964. But for the Ottomans the Yemen was Maqbarat al-Atrāk, the Cemetery of the Turks—in Turkish folksong to this day the Yemen is remembered as a place for which your sons are conscripted to fight, and they do not return.

Ṣan'ā' Under Ottoman Turkish Administration

During the second Ottoman occupation the Yemen was divided into four *sanjaqs* governed by *mutaṣarrifs*, the Markaz or Centre including the capital Ṣan'ā' where the Governor and Commander in Chief resided, 'Asīr, Hodeidah and Ta'izz. It was further divided into twenty-one *qaḍās*, al-Luḥayyah, Ḥajūr (Qufl), Abū 'Arīsh, Zaydiyyah, Bājil, Bayt al-Faqīh, Mocha, Ḥajjah, Sūdah, Ṭawīlah, Ḍawrān, Raymah, Zabīd, 'Udayn, Ibb, al-Ḥujariyyah, Ānis, Dhamār, Radā', Yarīm, Qa'ṭabah. Ṣan'ā' *sanjaq* included Ḥarāẓ, Kawkabān, Ānis, Ḥajjah, Dhamār, Yarīm, Radā' and 'Amrān.

The period, relative to the centuries of Zaydī rule, is well documented.[269] Apart from Turkish archives[270], there was the official paper *Ṣan'ā'* in Turkish and Arabic, *sālnāmahs* (rather inaccurate), issued at intervals from 1298-1314 H., and some Turkish books, to say nothing of European sources, but this

263 Wyman Bury, 39, states that the Turks insisted the Turkish civil and military should not come under the *sharī'ah* dispensation. The Arab gendarmerie, as enlisted men, had to choose between the *sharī'ah* and the *Qānūn*, but must abide by the decision made.

264 *Handbook of Yemen*, loc. cit.

265 Sharaf b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Barakātī, *al-Riḥlat al-Yamāniyah*, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1384, 6.

266 John Baldry, 'The Turkish-Italian War in the Yemen 1911-12', *Arabian studies*, 1976, III, 51-65, gives an account of the episode using, mainly, British records. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Idrīsī and the Ahl Futaynī of the Zarānīq were both anti-Turk and in contact in 1910. After the Italians declared war Ḥāshid and Nāṣir b. Mabkhūt left the Imām to put soldiers at the Idrīsī's disposal. The Italian blockade and attack on Hodeidah angered Yaḥyā so he declared war on the Italians, the declaration being published on public buildings in Ṣan'ā'. The Italo-Turkish Peace Treaty is dated 1912. Wyman Bury says that Ḥāshid declared partly for the Idrīsī, partly for the Imām.

267 It appears that Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha was not actually deposed till 1331/1912.

268 Harold Jacob, *Kings of Arabia*, London, 1923, 182.

269 European archival sources are abundant. See also Fārūq 'Uthmān Abāẓah, *al-Ḥukm al-'Uthmānī fi'l-Yaman*, 1872-1918, Cairo, 1975.

270 A promising source is given by S.J. Shaw, 'The Yildiz Palace Archives', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, The Hague, 1971, III, 227-8. It includes a report on the Ottoman military victory dated 9 January, 1873/11 Dhu'l-Qa'dah, 1289-9, i.e. the occupation of Ṣan'ā', a note from Abdülhamit II on the problems of the Yemen, reports by various governors including Maḥmūd Nadīm and 'Reports and papers on the administration of Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa in the Yemen'. A moderate and reasonable study is al-Sayyid Muṣṭafā Sālim, *Takwin al-Yaman al-ḥadīth 1904-1948*, Cairo, 1963.

section has drawn on mainly Arabic sources. Though doubtless a much fuller social history of Ottoman Ṣan'ā' than this sketch could be written relying upon these, this material still remains to be digested.

The Internal Administration of Ṣan'ā' Under the Ottomans

Scant published information is available on the earlier decades of Ottoman rule in Ṣan'ā' during the second occupation. The Turks probably used Muḥsin Mu'īḍ, the headman, in his former capacity. It happened that the Turkish Nā'ib in the Court (al-Maḥkamat al-Shar'iyyah), al-Ṭarābulsī, had been attacking the tenets of the Zaydī school, and he advised the Governor to imprison a number of Ṣan'ānī ulema. Muḥsin Mu'īḍ seems to have supported this démarche in 1294/1877, since he was imprisoned for the part he is alleged to have had in it a few years later.[271]

Shaykh 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bilaylī al-Ṣan'ānī was acting already as Mayor when deposed in 1305/1887-8 by the incoming Turkish Governor, 'Uthmān Nūrī Pasha, from the Ri'āsat al-Baladiyyah and imprisoned. In his place he appointed a Turk, Muṣṭafā Effendi al-Qayṣarlī who effected some notable changes. He regulated the affairs of Ṣan'ā' and fixed the weights and measures in its markets.[272] 'He ordered the streets and lanes to be cleansed and rebuked the common folk (*al-'āmmah*) and irresponsibles (*sufahā'*) for obscene language, abuse, swearing and cursing one another, punishing those who disobeyed. All orders issued by him were carried out.' Al-Bilaylī may have acted in a somewhat similar capacity to the Shaykh al-Mashāyikh of *Qānūn Ṣan'ā'*. Al-Wāsi'ī[273] speaks of him as a supporter of the Turks but a veritable right arm to the Ṣan'ānīs and a great help to them with the Government. Before the arrival of the Ottomans he had been at loggerheads with Shaykh Muḥsin Mu'īḍ, and he was imprisoned under the Governor Muṣṭafā 'Āṣim. Although unable to read or write he was liked and acceptable (*maqbūl*) with the Government which awarded him the title of Pasha. He is described as loving the Sādah and ulema, generous, a benefactor and giver of alms. In 1309/1891-92 the Governor sent him, as one of the chiefs of Ṣan'ā', to Ānis, but he was slain there and his head sent to Imām al-Manṣūr. His brother Muḥammad succeeded him, becoming Ra'īs al-Baladiyyah or Mayor, farming the customs (*gumruk*)[274] and commissariat (*arzāq al-dawlah*). He became wealthy thereby and even more generous than his brother, beloved by all. He provided a stipend for the *fuqahā'* to study the Qur'ān on Monday and Friday evenings (our Sunday and Thursday evenings). The Masjid al-Bilaylī he founded is discussed below.[275]

The Sayyid historians of the Yemen at any period say little of the ordinary citizens running Ṣan'ā', and so in the era of Turkish rule they speak almost exclusively of ulema and Arab high officials. Ḥusayn Ḥilmī Pasha, evidently a good Governor, free of corruption and with a liking for scholars (always a praiseworthy characteristic with Yemeni writers), took most of the steps towards modernisation in the Yemen and Ṣan'ā' in particular. He it was who built the large Dār al-Wilāyah at the Maydān.[276] One of the Turkish Government rules (*qawānīn*) was that the Province Administrative Council (Majlis Idārat al-Wilāyah)[277] should be attended by certain high officials at its sessions on Mondays and Thursdays each week—this Majlis may have been a substitute for the Dīwān of the previous Zaydī Imāms. The Judge (*Ḥākim*) of the Ḥanafiyyah, the Muftī, the Inspector of al-Awqāf al-Khārijiyyah, the Daftardār (= Nāẓir al-Māliyyah al-Yamaniyyah)[278] or Inspector of Finances, the Chief Secretary (Maktūbjī), and others elected by the notables of the country (*bilād*)[279] itself would attend under the presidency of the Governor (Wāli 'l-Ḥukūmah) 'to review the affairs of the Province.' Persons who took office with the Turks were often at risk from their fellow countrymen. When the Muftī of Ṣan'ā', Ḥasan al-Akwa', died certain leading Sayyids advised the Governor to appoint Muḥammad Jaghmān Muftī[280] in his place. In Ramaḍān Jaghmān used to pray by himself in the Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Mosque (in which, and in the Jāmi', he used to teach)—he was on one of those nights in 1315/1898 set upon by a Sayyid and *faqīh* of the Sūq al-Kawāfī, stabbed and thrown for dead into the foot-washing water-tank (*maṣfa 'l-mā*).[281] This seems to have been because of his excessive toadying to the Turks. In fact Jaghmān survived and the police caught his assailants.[282]

A regulation that caused great offence was the order in 1313/1895-6 that those Mashāyikh serving with the Turks must wear Turkish clothing—the red tarbush and trousers of broadcloth (*sarāwīl al-jawkh*), but Ḥusayn Ḥilmī brought back the turban as the wear of Arab officials of Turkish Yemen a few years later.[283]

Under Ḥusayn Ḥilmī, himself a man of learning, a number of educational institutions were founded—in Ṣan'ā', Dār al-Ma'ārif and the Commission,[284] schools (*makātib*), a preparatory school (Maktab al-I'dādiyyah) into which he introduced some Sayyid children and others, making them wear Turkish dress. The Dār al-Mu'allimīn, a teachers' training college, had some Zaydī ulema appointed by him to teach according to the Zaydī school, although Zabārah[285] maintains that he secretly sought to undermine Zaydism. Perhaps it was as part of this policy that he ordered the stipend (*ma'āsh*) assigned to the Head of the Ulema, Sayyid Aḥmad al-Kibsī, to be given on his death to a group of ulema, the *khaṭīb* of the Jāmi' Mosque and its *imām miḥrāb* who leads the prayer. Two scholars, one of them a Sayāghī, abstained from taking this money.[286] A technical school (Maktab/Dār al-Ṣanā'i')[287] was established in Bīr al-'Azab at which Arab boys were instructed in carpentry, tailoring (*khiyāṭah*), blacksmithery and weaving. Ḥusayn Ḥilmī also founded a preparatory school in Ta'izz and a technical school in Hodeidah. A hospital was established for outsiders who fell sick and they were given free treatment at the expense of the Municipality (al-Baladiyyah). There was also a pharmacy (Dār al-Ijz-khānah)[288] well supplied with drugs and medicaments, but it was burned with gunpowder in 1319/1901.

By 1893 a telegraph[289] line seems already to have been in operation between Ṣan'ā' and Hodeidah, and in 1319/1901-2 it was extended from Ṣan'ā' via Dhamār, to Ta'izz. Wyman Bury[290] mentions a provisional chain of military signalling posts for

271 Al-Wāsi'ī, 259. Zabārah says he consulted astrologers (*ḥussāb wa-munajjimūn*).
272 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 75. Cf. *Qānūn Ṣan'ā'*, n. 100.
273 Op. cit., 279.
274 By *gumruk* the duties on goods entering Ṣan'ā' Market are probably meant, and *arzāq al-dawlah* would be supplies for troops and others, especially grain.
275 *Masājid Ṣan'ā'*, 22, and p. .
276 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 374.
277 Ibid, 215.
278 Ibid, 371.
279 By '*bilād*' presumably Turkish Yemen is intended.
280 Ibid, 215, *fi wazīfat al-fatwā*.
281 Cf. Rossi, *L'arabo parlato*, 158, *maṣfā* (plur., *maṣāfi*), bacino avanti alla moschea. One washes (*yataṣaffā*) one's feet in it.
282 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 214. He was also Governor of Bilād al-Bustān.
283 Ibid, 178, with a verse of Ḥusayn al-'Arshī calling this Turkish uniform *thawb al-dhill*, garb of humiliation, & 374. Cf. al-Wāsi'ī, 291.
284 The 'Qūmisiyūn' under the Turks looked after the administrative side of the army. It is now a government department concerned with *shu'ūn al-muwaẓẓafīn*, i.e. looking after civil servants' pay, conditions etc. It was opposite the present (1974) 'Passports' (al-Jawāzāt) where also was the Turkish printing press.
285 Ibid, 374; al-Wāsi'ī, 290. The Governor is said to have compelled the people to do teaching.
286 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 234.
287 Ibid, 374. Wyman Bury, op. cit., 205, says the school was well equipped but there were no pupils and Aḥmad al-Shāmī confirms that the Ṣan'ānīs were not interested.
288 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 343.
289 Al-Wāsi'ī, 293; *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 293, and 133, the telegraph line at al-Miṣbāḥah near the wall of Ṣan'ā' under 'Aṣir mountain.
290 Op. cit., 164 with fuller information on the telegraph.

emergency communication between Ṣan'ā' and Hodeidah should the telegraph wires be cut.

Both Ottoman occupations have left their impress on Ṣan'ā'. Apart from some fine buildings there were changes in the administration of the city, notably the creation of the Municipality (Baladiyyah). A number of Turks stayed on in the Yemen after 1918 and have been absorbed into the Ṣan'ā' population. The Imām's army was organised on Turkish lines until it came under the influence of Egyptian instructors during the Nasserite period. Ṣan'ānī Arabic still retains a not inconsiderable Turkish vocabulary.

Alterations in the City Under the Turks

Heavy rains in 1295/1878 brought a great flood from Jabal al-Lawz north east of Ṣan'ā' which destroyed the Khanādiq of the Sā'ilah, mounting to al-Qāsimī and al-Abhar Mosques on the south east bank, destroying houses, and to Shāri' al-Bustan. It passed on to Sha'ūb and al-Rawḍah where it was joined by the Wādī Sa'wān flood and it destroyed houses in al-Rawḍah before it reached al-Khārid river.

In Ismā'īl Ḥāfiẓ Ḥaqqī's time (about 1880) it is recorded that the 'pit'[291] (*ghurqah*) of Sharārah was filled in, this was a sort of basin to draw off the floodwater from the Sā'ilah—other basins still exist for this purpose called *ghuraq Rūm*. The Turks paid special attention to renovating the mosques constructed by the first Ottoman régime which the Yemenis had tended to neglect as manifestations of another *madhhab* and foreign occupation, and at this time, says Zabārah,[292] the decoration of the Bakīriyyah Mosque was restored 'in the way it is now'. Opposite this mosque was the Turkish Ḥukūmah building and 'what were once the palaces of the Arab rulers, and today form barracks and Government offices', as Harris says.[293] This part of the city became the Turkish-European Quarter, the Europeans being mainly Greeks but the Caprotti[294] brothers had their establishment in this part of the city.

The Waqfs had been neglected and the revenues taken by the tribes, but the Turks put in a new inspector (*nāẓir*) and ordered the revenues to be utilised for the building and maintenance of mosques etcetera. Before he left Ṣan'ā' for 'Asīr the Governor Aḥmad Fayḍī ordered the Nāẓir al-Awqāf to take up the old worn carpets in al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, the whole Jāmi' to be re-plastered (*tajṣīṣ*), some of the *muqaddam* area to be carpeted (*tafrīsh*) with Persian prayer-carpets, and all the minarets (*manārāt*) to be plastered. This last seems to have been an innovation. Shaykh 'Alī al-Bilaylī contributed 500 *riyāls* to the re-carpeting. We noticed in 1975 that the stores of the Awqāf contained great quantities of worn Yemeni and other rugs which could conceivably go back to this time, mostly black and white goat-hair weaves.

In 1313/1895-6 Aḥmad Fayḍī levied a contribution (*i'ānah*) of 24,000 *riyāls* on the townsfolk, to pull down (and re-construct) Bāb al-Yaman, Bāb Sha'ūb and Bāb al-Sabāḥ, during the course of which they brought out of the walls lead and copper plates with *ṭalāsim* on them placed there by those of ancient days (*al-awwalūn*). These would be ancient inscriptions placed there to ward off evil from the city—it is not said where they went.

In the days of the Deputy Governor, 'Abdullāh Pasha, were built the Western Barracks ('Urḍī) Mosque with its fine minaret, the western gate of the 'Urḍī, the bridges west of it on the road to Khuzaymah Cemetery, Bāb Sharārah and other buildings there which Zabārah describes, as also the very large building north of the Artillery Barracks ('Urḍī al-Ṭūbjiyyah) south of Bāb al-Yaman. East of the Western Barracks he built many one-storey (*arḍiyyah*) rooms where officers and amīrs of the Niẓām without families could spend the night.

The Turkish Military Hospital was build on the ruins of an Imām's palace.

A tannery (*midbāghah*) for hides was set up by Ḥusayn Ḥilmī at Sha'ūb.

In 1318/1900-01 the new Pasha, 'Abdullāh, ordered that the streets of Ṣan'ā' should be cleansed, sprinkled and swept each day.

For purposes of defence, as already remarked, Fayḍī ordered many forts (*qila'*) to be built round Ṣan'ā' and on the Ṣan'ā'-Hodeidah road, a distance of a five day mule journey, as well as three in Nuqum, three in Jabal 'Aṣir and others in the Sawād of Sha'ūb, after a succession of Government offices in several parts of the country had been burned with gunpowder.

Imām Yaḥyā Ruler in Ṣan'ā'

Turkish power so near eclipse, Imam Yaḥyā moved to al-Rawḍah in August 1918.[295] The great Sayyids, ulema and merchants came out from Ṣan'ā' to greet him, and the tribes brought sheep-and-goats and cattle to slaughter at his house for joy at his arrival. The Governor Maḥmūd Nadīm and Commandant Aḥmad Tawfiq approved the Imām should enter Ṣan'ā' and that the Qaṣr with its equipment be handed over to him. The Imām sent two lieutenants to take it over. In Ṣafar 1337/November 1918 the Imām entered Ṣan'ā' amid the joyous acclamations of the populace, proceeding first to the Jāmi' to perform the 'Aṣr prayer. He took up residence in Bīr al-'Azab. Sayyid 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr had played a major part in engineering the triumph of the Imām. A great reorganisation commenced. The affairs of Ṣan'ā' were set in order, the *ma'mūrs* were stopped from taking bribes and oppressing the people, heresies (*bida'*) were put down, teachers sent to all villages, and hostages taken. Maḥmūd al-Nadīm and other Turks including the well known Qāḍī Rāghib chose to remain in official posts in the Yemen—it seems that al-Nadīm even cherished hopes of bringing back the Yemen to Turkey[296] and he had clearly not conformed with the Armistice conditions which required the Turkish armies in the Hijaz, 'Asīr and the Yemen to hand over their equipment to the British.

Of the internal situation in the Yemen at this time little is written or known. Despite goodwill to a native ruler, the Imām's position cannot have been too certain, but he sent his governors everywhere and put down tribal trouble with an iron hand. 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr was sent to deal with the Ḥarāz Ismā'īlīs, former Turkish supporters, but the port of Ṣan'ā', Hodeidah, and al-Luḥayyah had been handed over to his enemy the Idrīsī by the British. The Imām did not take Hodeidah until 1925 after British support had been withdrawn from the

291 *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), II, 95.
292 Idem.
293 Op. cit., 307.
294 Giuseppe (Yūsuf) Caprotti lived in Ṣan'ā' till after 1322/1905. Cf. *A'immat al-Yaman*, II, 181; al-Wāsi'ī, 281, for full details of the trouble over the tobacco Régie, and p.177. Luigi Caprotti who died in 1889 was for six years in charge of the Régie.
295 M. W. Wenner, *Modern Yemen 1918-1966*, Baltimore, 1967, is a useful book for this period where purely factual matters are concerned but has many errors and limited understanding of the situations. See the writer's review in *BSOAS*, London, 1970, XXXIII, 211-14.
296 Al-Nadīm wrote in Turkish to the King of Italy, President of France, President of USA, the King of Britain, a letter dated April 7th, 1922, in which he describes himself as 'Valie of Yemen for several years and now still a deputy for that country', declaring that 'no foreign government except the Ottoman Government can be received or accepted' in Yemen and 'Asīr. He attacks Britain for 'continuing to foment unjustified wars' which, to put it mildly, is a partisan viewpoint! He asks the Powers to 'allow us to reunite with Turkey', alludes to the Caliph, and claims to speak in the name of the Mashāyikh and Shaykhs of the Yemen and 'Asīr. (*Documents on the history of southwest Arabia*, ed. R. W. Sinclair, Salisbury N.C., 1976, no. 43. Some of the reports in the collection are extremely naïve and ill-informed). Harold F. Jacob, *Kings of Arabia*, though rather discursive is excellent on this period and has some remarks about al-Nadīm.

Idrīsī. The Shāfi'ī south had to be recovered so 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr was sent to Ta'izz and 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad al-Wazīr to conquer Wuṣābayn, Zabīd and other districts.

The Imām refused categorically to recognise the boundary between the Yemen and British Protectorate tribes agreed in part by the Anglo-Turkish Boundary Commission before World War I, but claimed all south west Arabia.[297] It cannot be said that his assertion of a right to territories Zaydī troops occupied only for some decades, and which had regained independence up to two centuries earlier, had a better claim to validity than engagements voluntarily entered into with the British by the local chiefs and their tribesmen. Nevertheless he occupied Ḍāli', Shu'ayb, Quṭayb, al-Aj'ūd, 'Awdhalī territory and others, and only withdrew after the British bombed Ta'izz, Dhamār, Māwiyah and Ibb in 1928. If one deprecates the bombing let it be unequivocally affirmed that the protected tribes for their part did not wish to have Yemeni governors and tax-collectors in their countries, Zaydī soldiery was extremely unpopular with them, and they co-operated with the British to expel Yemeni forces from their territory.

To keep down the heads of possible dissidents Yaḥyā's formidable and able warrior son Aḥmad was sent to Ḥajjah of Ḥāshid country in 1338/1919-20.[298] He wrested fiefs from the great Mashāyikh, broke the power of the al-Aḥmar family, humiliated the tribes of the area and so kept them in subjection that Nāṣir b. Nāṣir Mabkhūt fled to King 'Abd al-'Azīz in Sa'ūdī Ārabia. Aḥmad turned Ḥajjah into a fortified base from which he conquered the northern Tihāmah.[299] After quelling Ḥāshid he turned to the Zarānīq of the southern Tihāmah who had been a thorn in the side of the Turks. By the close of 1928 he had dealt harshly with them, but effectively.

In 1931 Aḥmad, now Crown Prince, was fighting the Dahm in the Jawf, and in the following year had pushed up to Baraṭ. Hearing that there were ornamented doors there plundered by the ancestors of the Dhū Muḥammad from the house of al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh b. al-Mutawakkil[300] at Bīr al-'Azab in the mid 13th/early 19th century he ordered his brother al-Ḥasan to find out about them and bring them to the camp. They were indeed discovered in the houses of Āl Maḍmūn, Al Dumaynah, al-Buḥūr houses and Āl Dhī Zayd and removed. In May 1933 the army giving battle to Yām, took Najrān by force and plundered the property of the Makārimah (Ismā'īlīs).

Aḥmad's northern advances and the Sa'ūdī-Yemen differences over Yemeni holdings in 'Asīr alarmed the Sa'ūdīs and they despatched an expedition to Najrān and one down the Tihāmah coast under Amīr (later King) Faysal which took and occupied Hodeidah. Imām Yaḥyā sued for peace—which was agreed in Ṣafar 1353/May 1934. The Yemeni negotiator was 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad al-Wazīr.

Imām Yaḥyā ordered Aḥmad to take over from 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr at Ta'izz in 1357/1938, but Ḥajjah still continued under Aḥmad's charge. He used to send the money he collected from the taxes there, not to Ṣan'ā', to which the taxes from the other provinces went. He was often at loggerheads with his father whom he not infrequently disobeyed. On one occasion he even gave an order within Imām Yaḥyā's territory—when the chit in question was brought to the Imām he endorsed it in red ink with the words *ḥau ḥau ḥau*—the cry used in driving donkeys. It seems to mean something like 'Get away with you, you ass!'

In the 1930s the British entered on a policy of benevolent pacification of their protected tribal areas. This led almost to a race between them and the Imām to take over tribes that had only rarely submitted to a central government. The aim of the tribes was to play one power off against another to their own pecuniary advantage, and nationalist sentiments were quite foreign to them. With a well-trained army paid by himself the Imām might hope to hold his own against dissident tribes, but the Imāms did use one tribe to punish another. Jirāfī suggests that the retention of Turkish officers helped to establish public security. Imām Yaḥyā amassed treasure in silver *riyāls* which he stored in Nuqum fort above Ṣan'ā'—miserly as Yaḥyā was, one motive in his hoarding could have been to have money in hand to subsidise friendly tribes and buy off the hostile.

Notwithstanding his isolationist policy Yaḥyā had to employ Europeans to run his munition factory and electric light plant at Ṣan'ā'; he also needed western doctors. He entered into treaty relations with a number of powers without conceding anything to them—Italy had most direct contacts through its medical mission, and Italy's growing power in the Red Sea was doubtless a useful counterpoise to the influence of Aden.

Propaganda has obscured what the Ḥamīd al-Dīn Imāms did for the Yemen. The establishment of physical security on the roads is a boon still remembered, and on my own travels I have used the tracks made by Yaḥyā but more extensively by Aḥmad to enable vehicles to penetrate the mountains. Yaḥyā was a great restorer of mosques to which he sometimes made extensions. In the educational field Yaḥyā set up al-Madrasat al-'Ilmiyyah at Bīr al-'Azab in 1344/1925-6, a residential college teaching the 'Islamic sciences' and providing its 200 pupils with food, and the Madrasat al-Aytām (Orphan School) with all Yemeni teachers, at which food and clothing were provided for the 700 pupils. Colleges of the traditional Islamic sciences were opened at Ṣa'dah, Ḥūth, Zabīd and Ta'izz. A middle and a secondary school are mentioned at Ṣan'ā', and elementary schools were opened all over the Yemen. It was always the practice of Yemeni rulers to keep hostages[301] as surety of good behaviour of families and tribes, and these were maintained and educated. In 1344/1925-6 Yaḥyā built the great library of the Ṣan'ā' Jāmi', collected books on every topic, and assembled the old Waqf libraries which had been allowed to fall into sad neglect. In fact Ṣan'ā' society had its aristocratic intellectual élite of Sayyids, *qāḍīs* and others, highly educated along traditional lines in literature, law, religion, philosophy and many other *'ilm* subjects.

At his court (*maqām*) Imām Yaḥyā appointed as Chief Secretary of the Dīwān Malikī, Qāḍī 'Abd al-Karīm Muṭahhar, his Prime Minister was Qāḍī 'Abdullāh b. Ḥusayn al-'Amrī, and the Head of the Court of Appeal (Isti'nāf) founded in the Turkish era, was Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-'Amrī. In 1341/1922-3 the Imām completed the building of Dār al-Sa'ādah[302] and moved into it.

Each administrative centre up to 1962 had a civil governor (*'āmil madanī*) representative of the central government whose duty it was to maintain security, a *qāḍī shar'ī* in charge of legal matters, and the shaykhs and tribesmen enrolled as soldiers. Soldiers received five *riyāls* a month from the Bayt al-Māl and a ration of grain.[303]

297 Jacob, op. cit., 142 seq., shows that the Imām was writing to British protected rulers after the 1911 treaty with the Turks seeking to extend his influence into their territory. The writer has seen similar correspondence after World War II.

298 For Sayyid Yaḥyā Shaybān's alliance with Nāṣir Mabkhūt to revolt in Ḥajjah, take Ṣan'ā' and depose Yaḥyā, see 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Mujāhid al-Shamāhī, *al-Yaman*, Cairo, 1972, 172 seq. The attempt in 1918-19 failed and Shaybān was imprisoned in Qaṣr Ṣan'ā'.

299 Al-Wāsi'ī, 1st ed., 282, says that in 1345/1926-27, Aḥmad left Ḥajjah for Ṣan'ā' met by tribes through whose territory he passed till he came to 'Amrān from which he went by automobile to Ṣan'ā'. Soldiers and the music came out to meet him, and the amirs, ulema, Ashrāf, merchants and all the people. It was in the same year that he went to deal with the southern Tihāmah.

300 See p.88a.

301 Hostages were also kept by Aden Protectorate rulers. Though Yemeni reformers inveigh against the system it was far from harsh and a practical means of forcing tribesfolk to keep the peace.

302 Al-Mutawakkil Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn (early 12th/18th century) had formerly built here. It has an old garden around it. In 1346/1927-28 Yaḥyā completed building Jāmi' al-Qubbah, a large Jāmi' connected with Qubbat al-Mutawakkil . . . al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn.

303 For administration in the Yemen, see *Western Arabia and the Red Sea*, B.R. 527, Oxford, 1946, 328-39.

In the Shāfi'ī districts in particular the corrupt practice of the officials and Zaydī tribal soldiers from the north pressed heavily, though there is no reason to think that it was notably worse than under rulers at any time in the past. Shāfi'īs would declare that Imām Yaḥyā was all right but his *muwazẓafīn*, officials, full of injustice (*ẓulm*) and the soldiers ruthless robbers. In northern districts where taxes were collected by local assessment (*bi-'l-amānah*) conditions were more favourable, and subsidies were given to certain Zaydī tribal chiefs.

The northern and Mashriq tribes like Arḥab and Khawlān cannot support themselves on their land and so must emigrate—a lesser chieftain with a body of tribesmen would ask the Imām to enter his service and be despatched to a southern district to assist in tax collection. The Shāfi'īs of the Lower Yemen would emigrate to Aden and thence to many parts of the world including Europe and America. They kept in close touch with their relatives to whom they sent remittances and they learned that conditions in the Yemen could be improved and that the Imām's isolationist policy must inevitably break down. Otherwise in the twenties and thirties people did not seem to move much within the Yemen from one place to another. They had virtually no access to the foreign press which was banned and the Yemen had at first only a monthly paper, *al-Iymān* printed by the old Turkish press in the Imām's court (*maqām*). There was also a small press at the Education Office (Idārat al-Ma'ārif)[304] which published a few books like *Masājid Ṣan'ā'* upon which we have so heavily drawn.

Anti-régime Movements

Imām Yaḥyā's iron grasp of the Yemen, often through the instrument of his eldest son Aḥmad, had brought into subjection many proud independent men and tribes. This along with his inflexibility, his isolationist policy which allowed of no improvements, and the exactions of corrupt officials and harsh soldiery (though this was nothing new in the Yemen) brought a mounting resentment.[305] His policy had been not only to bring the powerful tribes under central government control, but to weaken the power of the great Sayyid houses which enjoyed tribal backing as *'hijrah'*.[306]

It is therefore easily understood that opposition to the Ḥamīd al-Dīn was fomented by men belonging to families of standing, Sayyids, *qāḍīs*, and tribal chiefs.[307] The first two classes at least were contemptuous of soldiers though they might use them, for they themselves were an aristocracy of the pen *and* the sword. In the spring of 1935 a young Sayyid, Aḥmad al-Murtā',[308] poor and of a family of small consequence, fixed for himself a tour of inspection of schools which he used to contact persons of note whom he knew would bear the Imām some grudge or have reason to be disaffected. He succeeded in getting in touch with an imposing list of notables including al-Aḥmar house of Ḥāshid, and the celebrated al-Wazīr Sayyids. His efforts led to the formation of the 'Opposition Society (*Hay'at al-Niḍāl*)'[309] a secret organisation with headquarters in Ṣan'ā' and branches elsewhere. Until 1944 it was the first organised resistance to the régime, aiming at promoting administrative reform, promotion of the Zaydī Da'wah,[310] the conversion of the vital support of the northern tribes to its cause, and linking with the foreign press and individuals to criticize the Imām's rule. Its Ṣan'ā' Treasurer was al-'Izzī Ṣāliḥ al-Sinaydār.

Yaḥyā's isolationism was never complete and even in the first decade of his reign some student missions were sent to study at the Azhar in Cairo[311] where they joined the Yemeni Riwāq.[312] The most outstanding of others who studied at one time or another in Cairo after this time was the famous poet Qāḍī Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Zubayrī.[313] In 1935 the Yemeni Government requested places for five young men at the Military College and five at the Radio-telegraphy School at Baghdad. This was to cost the Yemen dear for two of the signallers, 'Abdullāh al-Sallāl and Ḥasan al-'Amrī,[314] were to participate in anti-Ḥamīd al-Dīn movements. At Baghdad they seem to have been exposed to an extreme nationalist current. In fact many young men who had spent time abroad seem to have hoped to achieve great things on returning to the Yemen but turned disgruntled when they met no response from Imām Yaḥyā.

A weakness which the opponents of the Ḥamīd al-Dīn house sought to exploit was the jealousies of the young princes (*Suyūf* (sing., *Sayf*) *al-Islām*). Yaḥyā was convinced that Aḥmad whom he had made heir-apparent in 1927, was the ablest of his sons to succeed him. Some writers have made much of the effect of establishing succession to the Imāmate in one particular Sayyid house from father to son, on the other prominent Sayyid houses from which an Imām might be drawn. In practice, Zaydī history shows that a son, not necessarily the eldest, usually succeeds his father, though it might be after an uncle or other relative, whatever Zaydī theory may hold regarding election to the Imāmate from any Sayyid house. When the princes expressed their fears of Aḥmad to their father his rejoinder was *'Aḥmad hū ḥajar al-maſjar,* Aḥmad is the stopper-stone',[315] meaning that he is the strong man. It was precisely because Aḥmad would be a strong ruler like his father that men of rank impatient of authority were in opposition to him.

At this stage Aḥmad, though given to secluding himself at times to ponder state affairs, would also hold court at which persons of divergent political groupings mixed—chiefs including Ḥusayn al-Aḥmar, Amīn Abū Rās, poets were invited like Zubayrī, Sayyids Aḥmad al-Shāmī and Zayd al-Mawshikī, Ḥusayn al-Waysī author of the geography,[316] Qāḍī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iryānī. Aḥmad Nu'mān[317] of a distinguished family of am-Turbah of Shāfi'ī Yemen was also one of a list of names significant in Yemeni politics. The court scintillated with wit, and verse, literature, history were the very stuff of conversation. The Heir-Apparent listened to the young Liberals (Aḥrār) encouraging them to speak of their views and proposals. It is likely Aḥmad was keeping a finger on the political pulse with

304 The output of this press has been surveyed by Ettore Rossi, 'La stampa nel Yemen', *Oriente moderno*, Roma, 1938, XVIII, 568-80.

305 Aḥmad al-Shāmī, 'Yemeni literature in Ḥajjah Prisons', *Arabian Studies*, II, 1975, 43, gives idealised Zaydī reasons for the disaffection for Imām Yaḥyā.

306 See p.42a seq.

307 Information given me personally by some actors in these movements apart, Qāḍī 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Mujāhid al-Shamāḥī, *al-Yaman*, has been used. It seems a fairly faithful version of the facts but may be projecting recent attitudes and ideas. It is not guiltless of giving a propagandist interpretation of events and it overemphasises the role of the Shamāḥīs.

308 Al-Murtā' was steeped in the writings of the earlier Arab political theorists, like al-Kawākibī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, and Muḥammad Rashīd (al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 177).

309 *Niḍāl* also means struggle, defence.

310 Essentially the *Da'wah* requires an Imām—this problem, if mainly theoretical, has not been solved in the present Republic.

311 *Oriente Moderno*, Rome, 1927, 335, gives an account of the first *diplomatic* mission to Italy.

312 'Loggias', but it may be described as a teaching group.

313 See 'The Yemeni poet al-Zubayrī . . . ', op. cit.

314 Not of the same house as Yaḥyā's Prime Minister.

315 Al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 182, a Yemeni proverb. A dam (*sadd*), pool (*birkah*), large cistern (*ḥawḍ*) have a hole (*maſjar*) at the bottom to let out water for irrigating fields. It is closed by a strong stone when the cistern etc. is filling and the stone removed to empty it.

316 *Al-Yaman al-kubrā*, Cairo, 1962. He also wrote *Riḥlat Sumuww al-Amīr Sayf al-Islām Waliyy al-'Ahd al-mu'aẓẓam Aḥmad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, Cairo, 1358/1939, printed under the supervision of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Nu'mān.

317 Aḥmad Nu'mān a leading Yemeni Liberal for many years in exile, has held important ministerial posts in the Yemen Arab Republic. He clearly had considerable admiration for Imām Aḥmad despite their differences.

the Liberals and assessing their value as possible supporters. The Liberals began to realise that Aḥmad was far from sympathetic to their ideas and unlikely to promote them. The point[318] came when in early summer 1944, Zubayrī and Nu'mān abandoned Ta'izz for Aden—there they founded the Yemenite Liberal Party (Ḥizb al-Aḥrār),[319] well subsidised by Yemeni merchants abroad and others. A little later Aḥmad al-Shāmī, Zayd al-Mawshikī and Muṭī' Dammāj joined them, but they returned to the Yemen where the Heir-Apparent welcomed them. They eventually adhered to the aristocratic group around 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr—the Aden Liberals and the Āl Wazīr were uncertain allies.

Another group was founded in 1363/1944 called the Reform Association (Jam'iyyat al-Iṣlāḥ) mostly an Ibb Qāḍī group with Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Akwa' as its president. It sent a draft pamphlet entitled *Barnāmaj al-iṣlāḥ*[320] to Zubayrī in Aden where it was printed and distributed. Qāḍī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iryānī was a member of this group.

In September the same year the Imām ordered Aḥmad al-Muṭā', al-Sinaydār, Muḥammad al-Akwa' and three brothers of al-Sayāghī family among a number of others to be imprisoned, as were also most of the members of the mission to Iraq. They were allowed to cool their heads in prison for a while then most were released.

Imprisonment was evidently used by the Imāms as a sort of disciplinary punishment for offences, even those involving serious disloyalty, and for such misdemeanours as financial corruption. It carried no stigma. The rulers who could rely on no one individual as a person permanently to trust, had no choice but to employ able men of the administrative classes, tribes and officers. So an offender was consigned to prison to cool his ardour or learn his lesson and then brought out again at the Imām's will for re-employment. The Imāms were doubtless fully aware of the dangers in this situation and their sole recourse was to play one potential conspirator off against another. The situation is complicated by a web of kinships etc. It is therefore not surprising to find the ex-prisoners of Ḥajjah back in office and emerging as conspirators and later officials in the Republic.

The strength of Yaḥyā's rule, al-Shamāḥī avers, was founded on his reliance on his Prime Minister over so many years, Qāḍī 'Abdullāh al-'Amrī.[321] This obstacle in the way of the Imām's opponents, this rock, he says, was smashed by the decline of al-'Amrī as the fourteen princes, sons of the Imām took office as ministers,[322] and dislodged the Amīrs 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr and his cousin 'Alī who had been so largely instrumental in bringing Yaḥyā to power. In rivalry and fear of his brother Aḥmad, Sayf al-Islām Ḥusayn agreed with the Wazīr Amīrs and Sayyid 'Alī b. Ḥamūd of the prominent Sharaf al-Dīn[323] family of Kawkabān, from which Imāms had been elected in the past, that after Imām Yaḥyā's decease, 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr should be elected Imām. Ḥusayn managed to persuade his full brother Ḥasan to come in with them. Aḥmad, doubtless informed of this alliance, turned a blind eye to the activities of the advocates of reform (*du'āt al-iṣlāḥ*) and encouraged them against his brothers. The 'Youth' (al-Shabāb)[324] at all times disliked Ḥasan's over-conservatism and rigidity—his reputation for avarice also did not help make him a popular personality.[325]

Searching for external support Aḥmad Muṭā' and the Wazīrs despatched 'Abdullāh al-Shamāḥī armed with letters to King 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd in late 1946. He accorded al-Shammāḥī an audience but refused to dishonour his treaty with Imām Yaḥyā. At the Ḥajj immediately following, al-Shamāḥī met Ḥasan al-Bannā', the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brothers, who promised his support.

Early in 1947 al-Bannā''s man arrived in Ṣan'ā', an Algerian Brother, al-Fuḍayl al-Wartalānī,[326] an agitator who with the active co-operation of the conspirators stirred up the 'Youth', officers and schoolboys. The Imām, aged and ailing, was foiled in his desire to expel al-Wartalānī who was backed by the Heir-Apparent and Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Kibsī,[327] once ambassador in Cairo, who while secretly working against the Ḥamīd al-Dīn, was trusted by the Imām and his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. The extremist 'Youth' in Ṣan'ā' which included Ḥasan al-'Amrī, 'Abd al-Malik al-Ṭayyib[328] and others, started shooting, bomb-throwing and setting off mines.[329] The more responsible conspirators were somewhat disquieted at this, and although, for instance, the Hay'at al-Niḍāl group wanted 'popular rule (*al-ḥukm al-sha'bī*)'[330] they were well aware that the support of the Zaydī tribes could only be won by a Sayyid with tribal backing. They therefore decided to back 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr for the Imāmate.[331] At first he expressed unwillingness. A scheme for a constitutional government was drawn up, written down by Aḥmad al-Shāmī[332] from a draft by Al-Wartalānī, al-Kibsī and others, and sent to Zubayrī and Aḥmad Nu'mān in Aden for printing—it was to be kept secret to be distributed when the revolution was to be proclaimed.

The Heir-Apparent Aḥmad's spies in the ranks of the Liberals soon informed him of the existence of this document known as the 'Sacred Covenant (*al-Mīthāq al-Muqaddas*)' and he saw the opportunity to blow the conspiracy.[333] In Ta'izz he unleashed a rumour that Imām Yaḥyā had been murdered and 'Abdullāh

318 Al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 191, avers that the break came when Aḥmad declared 'I beg God I may not die until this sword of mine is dyed with the blood of the Moderns (*dimā' al-'Aṣriyyin*).' By 'Moderns' or 'Contemporaries' he seems to have meant those following Muḥammad 'Abduh, al-Kawākibī, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, al-'Aqqād, in fact the Egyptian Islamic modernists and literati of the time.

319 The Aden Aḥrār being in contact with the outside world have been credited with an importance quite out of proportion to their role within the Yemen at this time.

320 A printed programme of reforms demanded by the Liberals, *Barnāmaj Ḥizb al-Aḥrār al-Yamanī bi-Ṣan'ā'*, printed by Fatāt al-Jazīrah Press in Aden, dated 1357/1938-9 (the date of the programme, not the printing) was circulating to my certain knowledge among Shāfi'ī Yemenis in Britain in 1941 and probably even two years earlier.

This manifesto is moderate, even conservative, in tone. It asks for the abolition of abuses arising from tax collection, especially on agriculture, the ending of billeting soldiers on tax-defaulters, abolition of customs-duties, the abolition of the corvée (*sukhriyyah*) of impounding beasts for Government use, that *awqāf* income be used for teaching and the maintenance of mosques. Certain clauses of a more political nature would mean diminishing the power of the Imām. The *Barnāmaj* itself states that it was drawn up in secret and distributed in the Yemen and abroad. It appears to be a separate document from the Reform Association's *Barnāmaj*.

321 The *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 248 seq., states that the first of the 'Amrī house to transfer from hijrat al-'Amāriyah in Ḥadā country to Ṣan'ā' arrived in the 12th/18th century. He was in charge of the management (*siyāsah*) of Ṣan'ā'.

322 The princes were Yaḥyā's sons by seven wives, Sharifahs, not all married to him at the same time of course. 'Alī, Amīr of Ta'izz was replaced by the Heir-Apparent Aḥmad and 'Abdullāh Amīr of Hodeidah by Sayf al-Islām 'Abdullāh. Ibb was given to Ḥasan. Cf. al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 182. The princes have been accused of setting out to acquire land—which any Yemeni group in power would aim to do. In fact their land-holdings were quite modest and the wild accusations of great holdings quite untrue.

323 See p.92b.

324 Yesterday's Shabāb are often today's 'establishment', but they seem mostly to be townsfolk, especially schoolboys with a 'modern' education, junior officials, etc., often not of high social standing, though they do have Sayyids and Qāḍīs in their ranks.

325 Al-Shamāḥī, nevertheless considers him the ablest and most experienced administrator after Aḥmad. The writer met him in his cave at al-Kitāf in 1964.

326 Al-Shamāḥī, 205, a scholar with a religious training and merchant who wrote a not very realistic report on the Yemeni economy.

327 During World War II, British postal censorship intercepted correspondence showing that al-Kibsī had links with the Liberals. He was known as al-Safīr al-Sākit, the 'Silent Ambassador' because his instructions were merely to listen but not to engage in discussions at that time, on, notably, the formation of the Arab League.

328 Reputedly author of *Naksat al-Yaman*, attacking the Republican régime of al-Sallāl, about 1963 or 1964.

329 Al-Shammāḥī, op. cit. 207.

330 Perhaps because this group contained few Sayyids.

331 It may be that al-Shamāḥī's account here is coloured by the wish to defend himself and the Niḍāl group from what would now be regarded as backing a 'feudalist' candidate.

332 Aḥmad al-Shāmī, op. cit., 44, says, 'This was a revolt of the *'ulamā'* and the motives behind it were purely patriotic and religious', but also refers to political leaders with other motives.

333 The document, quoted by al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 210, merits study. Aḥmad al-Shāmī, op. cit., 45, adds some interesting detail.

al-Wazīr made Imām.[334] This was published in the Aden paper of the Liberals, *Ṣawt al-Yaman.*

A dramatic picture of the scene at the Imām's Majlis in Ṣan'ā' when the Aden telegrams arrived is drawn by al-Shamāḥī. Al-Wazīr, unaware of these events, entered the Majlis and was deeply engaged in the work assigned to him when the Imām turned to him with a smile, handed him a bunch of papers, saying, 'Have a look at these papers, Fakhrī,[335] they are such and such a number.' Al-Wazīr was surprised to hear the Imām give the exact number of papers, but when he glanced at the first telegram congratulating him on the throne, a shudder ran through him and he hastily disclaimed it. 'Look at them all first', said the Imām, 'then let's talk.' Trying to recover his breath al-Wazīr read them all including the 'Sacred Covenant', and asking the Imām's leave to speak, he told him this was a plot against the Imām and himself by which it was intended to destroy the Imām's trust in him and those mentioned in the 'Covenant'. Finally he took the oath that he had nothing to do with the Aden Liberals. His written disavowal was published in *al-Iymān.*

Though the Imām appeared ostensibly satisfied of al-Wazīr's innocence, papers were later discovered in his strong box[336] revealing his intention for some time to convict and imprison the leading Wazīrs. The conspirators hurried to set a day for Yaḥyā's assassination—the 7 Rabī' II, 1367/18 February, 1948. While the Imām was on his daily tour in the country round Ṣan'ā' in a single unescorted car, accompanied by 'Abdullāh al-'Amrī (whom the conspirators thought to include in their government), one of the Imām's small grandsons, and only two soldiers, they were mown down by machine-gun and rifle fire outside Ḥizyaz, a few miles south of the city, by a hired tribal malcontent, 'Alī al-Qarda'ī of Murād from Ḥarīb, and a gang of tribal dissidents—Murād strangely enough had provided the murderer of his ancestor 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Yaḥyā was killed with his small grandson on his lap.[337]

Al-Qarda'ī reported the murder to 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr who took no immediate action to inform others, but the news reached the ears of Sayf al-Islām Ḥusayn who hastened to the Telegraph Office and sent a message in cipher to Aḥmad in Ta'izz. Only some hours later did the Iraqi officer, Ra'īs Jamāl Jamīl,[338] in charge of security in Ṣan'ā' district and of the officers and cadets at the Military College, 'Abdullāh al-Sallāl and Ḥasan al-'Amrī get to hear of the murder. Prince Ḥusayn unwisely left the Qaṣr to protect the mansions Dār al-Sa'ādah and Dār al-Shukr. Jamāl Jamīl meantime went with 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr to the Qaṣr where, by sheer force of personality, al-Wazīr managed to persuade Yaḥyā's loyal guards there to join him, Jamāl went to the 'Urḍī where the 'Youth' and some army were waiting to join him. Jamāl and al-Sallāl then proceeded to the two mansions to deal with Ḥusayn whom Jamāl shot in the tense minutes while parleying with him. Ḥasan al-'Amrī had meanwhile taken over the Radio Station, and all resistance was ended.

The conspirators had been foiled in their attempt to have the Heir-Apparent Aḥmad assassinated in Ta'izz simultaneously with the Imām at Ṣan'ā'. Aḥmad took swift and vigorous action. He left Ta'izz for Hodeidah via Ḥays and Zabīd with a small escort in trucks. At Bājil he proclaimed himself Imām taking the title al-Nāṣir, the Victorious, sent out telegrams to rally the tribes to his side and avenge Imām Yaḥyā, then took the road to Ḥajjah from which he directed operations against Ṣan'ā'. Sharaf al-Dīn made a *volte-face* in his favour and helped stir the tribes against al-Wazīr.

'Abdullāh al-Wazīr had been declared Imām in the Jāmi' at Ṣan'ā' and had appointed a government. As a regicide he met with disapproval in various quarters and so his attempts to obtain recognition and aid from Arab governments failed. His expeditions, mostly it seems of the Army (al-Jaysh al-Niẓāmī), were defeated and most deserted to Aḥmad at Ḥajjah. The tribes that rallied to Aḥmad had soon invested Ṣan'ā' on every side, catching some Aden Arab journalists[339] sympathetic to the Liberals. It was not long before 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr's forces comprised only schoolboys, the Military College, a few soldiers and tribesmen. The defence of Ṣan'ā' was divided into four sectors—'Abdullāh al-Wazīr held the Qaṣr and Jabal Nuqum, Jamāl Jamīl was responsible for Bāb al-Shaqādīf, al-Sabaḥah, the air-field and the 'Urḍī-Barracks as well as the general command of Ṣan'ā'; Bāb Sha'ūb and Rās Ṣan'ā' area were under Aḥmad al-Muṭā' and al-'Izzī Ṣāliḥ al-Sinaydār, while the fourth sector, the Radio, Bīr al-'Azab and 'Asir, were assigned to Muḥammad al-Shāmī, Ḥusayn al-Muqbilī, and the Shamāḥis.

Nuqum with its stores and treasure fell to Aḥmad's tribes. Three of Imām Yaḥyā's sons had been confined to the Qaṣr, and one of them, Yaḥyā (b. Yaḥyā) managed to win over the garrison and even to fire on 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr himself in Dār al-Qaṣr. With his supporters falling away on all sides and the princes taking over control of the Qaṣr, 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr saw no alternative but surrender. So he and his companions went to Prince Yaḥyā who took them into custody and ordered beacons to be lit on the minaret of the Qaṣr and his house as a token of victory over al-Wazīr in the Qaṣr. No sooner had these beacons been shown than the sympathisers of Aḥmad in Ṣan'ā' lighted the ashes soaked with petrol already prepared on their roofs, firing off rifles and shouting that al-Imām al-Nāṣir Aḥmad had entered the Qaṣr and soon all Ṣan'ā' was alight with beacons[340] to welcome Imām Aḥmad. This caused confusion in the city and encouraged the tribes to assault the Gates where the guards offered little resistance and mostly declared for Aḥmad. The city fell on Saturday 3 Jumādā I, 1367/14 March, 1948. Imām 'Abdullāh al-Wazīr's reign in Ṣan'ā' had lasted less than a month.

The sack of Ṣan'ā' by the tribes whose lust for plunder was unleashed has left a lasting impression on the Ṣan'ānīs—the sheer wantonness of it is astonishing—one sees sometimes in the sūqs for sale carpets slashed with swords. The Qā' al-Yahūd was sacked though the Jews had no part in an Arab dynastic quarrel, and Louise Février[341] found little but ruins to see. Al-Shamāḥī dramatically pictures the tribes entering, amid ululating of the women, rumours, victory fires, with guns, picks, axes, camels and donkeys, paying no heed to ululations, fires and welcoming acclamations of Aḥmad. All they wanted was the money and stores of goods and the tribal armies looted houses, merchant establishments, huts, mosques, devouring everything in them, fighting each other over them—this went on for seven days. Louise Février says they demolished a fine house close by carrying off the wooden doors and windows. They snatched off the jewellery of Arab women. Early looters with camels heavily laden with booty often met late-comers who in turn despoiled them. They killed anyone who resisted. The tribes paid no heed to their chiefs and all the Ḥamīd al-Dīn could do was to try to protect the mansions of Imām Yaḥyā from being plundered of their goods, stores, arms and ammunition. Al-Shamāḥī goes further and accuses one of the princes of attacking and plundering

334 This is al-Shamāḥī's interpretation of how false the rumour of the Imām's death came to be prematurely published—it is plausible.

335 Fakhri = 'Abdullāh, see p.428a, n.262.

336 Al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 209. It contained the keys to his treasures, seals for resolutions (*qarārāt*) and agreements, correspondence and orders. There was his *mudhakkirah māliyyah*, a minute in which were recorded his treasuries (*khazā'in*) of gold, silver, grain, weapons, jewellery, the incomings and outgoings of each *liwā* and *qaḍā* district, a list of what constituted his private property and what belonged to the Bayt al-Māl. In itself this gives some indication of how Imām Yaḥyā ran his administration.

337 Next day they were secretly buried at Masjid al-Raḥmah in Bīr al-'Azab, also called Masjid al-Quḍāh (*Masājid*, 93).

338 Jamāl Jamīl could not return to Iraq for political reasons. He came to the Yemen with the mission of the 'aqīd Ṣafwat in 1938, and had been in the Bakr Ṣidqī plot against Ja'far al-Midfa'ī in 1936 and against Nūrī Sa'īd.

339 Including an old friend, the late Muḥammad Luqmān, editor of *Fatāt al-Jazīrah*, a sympathiser of the Liberals about whom his paper frequently published articles.

340 See Louise Février's description.

341 Loc. cit., 134.

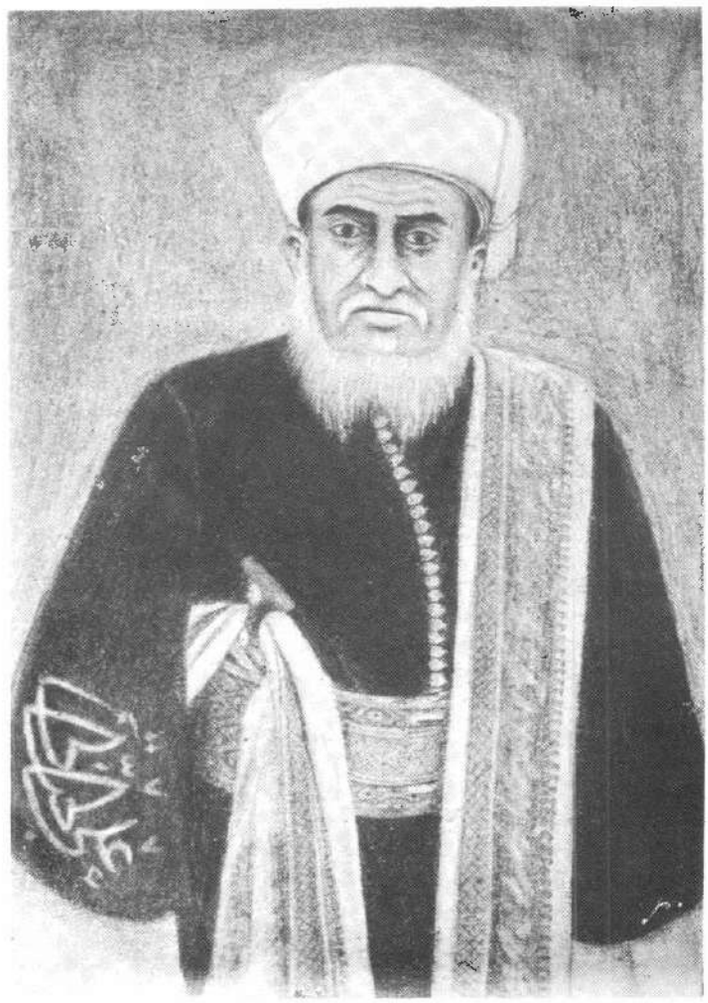
houses.[342] The victors however spared no effort to track down all those associated with the conspiracy—the leaders were sent to Ḥajjah, and shortly afterwards the Āl Wazīr and others were brought back and executed in the main square of Ṣan'ā'. In all something over twenty persons of family and distinction were executed. Sayf al-Islām Ibrāhīm, who had joined the Liberals in Aden in 1946 but was caught in Ṣan'ā', died mysteriously at Ḥajjah. Small fry like al-Sallāl and Ḥasan al-'Amrī were imprisoned at Ḥajjah.[343]

Aḥmad had not taken part in the siege in person. He was now elected Imām by the Ṣan'ā' ulema as al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh the day after the fall of the city. His retaliation for his father's murder was severe but restricted, not accompanied by wholesale executions.[344] The assassination of Yaḥyā was unpopular and Yemenis in Aden heaped abuse on the Liberals. The writer was in Ḥaḍramawt at this time and recalls the shock felt in Tarīm Sayyid circles at the deed. Some say that Aḥmad promised as a reward for the tribes the sack of Ṣan'ā'—that he made such a promise seems unlikely—but even he could probably not have controlled them once they were loosed. For the Ṣan'ānīs the sack was a disaster, many big merchant houses were ruined and the great Samsarat Muḥammad b. Aḥsan has been closed ever since. It created a hostility to Aḥmad there and he made his capital Ta'izz to which Ṣan'ā' played second fiddle till the coup d'état of 1962.

Characters of Yaḥyā and Aḥmad Ḥamīd al-Dīn

What manner of man was Yaḥyā who ruled the Yemen for thirty years and whose imprint on it can be seen to this day? Wyman Bury[345] quotes a Turkish officer just returned from Khamir, 'He just sleeps and eats, and drinks coffee.' 'I gathered that he took no very active part in the affairs of the vilayet, beyond receiving reports from his nominees and adherents, which should keep him in touch with everything that goes on. He never smokes,[346] lest he should offend the strict Moslem prejudice of his more fanatical supporters, and conforms to all the rigours of Islam.' The British Intelligence Handbook[347] reports that 'he is said to be an intelligent man of shifty, weak, and yielding character, who, owing to his parsimony, has not much hold over the tribesmen of the north-east. He greatly weakened his position by releasing, in accordance with the peace of 1911, 400 hostages kept in captivity since 1904.' Bury[348] more shrewdly observes that he is less powerful on the side of Government than he was in opposition.

Yaḥyā throughout his life was stigmatised by an almost ingenious miserliness. As a politician and administrator he is not to be despised and he put to the best use such assets as Imāms have, political acumen, sanctity and scholarship. If no soldier, as Bury says, the interpretation of his daily routine as inactivity is quite wrong, for the writer sharing the same caves as the Ḥamīd al-Dīn princes in 1964 and 1966 has watched this so-called inactivity which goes on through the waking hours—a hard exercise of brain and personality. A man of extreme conservatism the Imām hoped, through isolating the Yemen from the outside world, including modernised Muslim countries like Egypt, to avoid corruption of the pure Islamic faith (as he saw it), and politically to preserve the Yemen's independence. The ban on the foreign Arabic press was part of this policy. Music was banned for sectarian reasons.[349] Yaḥyā was a man of simple manners—he is said, at least in his early days, to have gone about Ṣan'ā' with only a single soldier as escort—Presidents of the Republic have truckloads of soldiers and motor-cycle outriders as they flash through the narrow streets of old Ṣan'ā' to the Jāmi'. Every morning he would sit in the court of his mansion Dār al-Sa'ādah to hear complaints—the tree where he sat is still pointed out to visitors.



8.2 Imam Yahyā Hamīd al-Dīn. Critics aver that his nose was more aquiline in shape than would appear from the portrait. (Artist: 'Alī al-Jannātī.)

Imām Aḥmad Nāṣir al-Dīn was a ruler of tremendous personality, astute, brave, resolute, learned and witty, suspicious, unable to brook opposition, often terrifying, patient but swift to action. His reign saw great change in the external world forcing itself on the Yemen. Internally al-Shamāḥī provides the clearest survey of the inimical forces working against Aḥmad. They were many and varied—certain great Sayyid houses, the tribal chiefs of Ḥāshid, Baraṭ and others, certain Qāḍī houses, the young officers, the many Shāfi'īs in the Yemen, Aden and abroad mainly finding their inspiration in Liberal (Aḥrār) propaganda.

Not at once obvious is the ever faster rate of economic decline of the Yemen that seems already to have started in Yaḥyā's day, in relation to the external world, especially with the growth of Sa'ūdī Arabia and the oil states. There was no way to arrest this decline in a basically agricultural country, the known resources of which were already fairly fully exploited and which the security provided by the dynasty had even allowed to develop a little.

342 Al-Shamāḥī, op. cit., 265.
343 See Aḥmad al-Shāmī, op. cit., 43-60, for a fascinating account of the Ḥajjah prisoners.
344 At most some 20-30 persons were executed.
345 *Arabia Infelix*, 136.
346 Yaḥyā however chewed *qāt* but abandoned it in later life.
347 *Handbook of Yemen*, op. cit., 44.
348 Op. cit., 158.
349 It is said of Jābir Rizq al-Kawkabānī, a famour poet and musician of Kawkabān now dead that since music was prohibited only a part of his verse and music have survived. He performed in secret. Gramophones etc., were also prohibited.

This seems to have been accompanied by a large rise in the population. For economic decline the Ḥamīd al-Dīn were conveniently awarded the blame and even a commonsense movement among farmers who substituted profitable cash-crop *qāt*-growing for difficult and not very profitable coffee was reckoned a fault for which the Imāms were responsible.

If these problems were not enough the rise of Nasserist expansionism, the success of army coups in Egypt and Iraq and the interference of the USSR came to complicate the situation. Where, in the past, anti-régime movements were mostly dealt with as an internal matter they now came into the full glare of radio and press publicity. Aḥmad could and did deal severely with dissidents—he was even, all things considered, reasonably clement—but he could not cope with the 'media' which made of every dissident a martyr.

Imām Aḥmad and Unrest in the Yemen: Imām al-Badr

Aḥmad was now firmly established as Imām and the popular tide meanwhile running in his favour but the rivalry of the Ḥamīd al-Dīn princes was to lead to the downfall of their house. This rivalry the prisoners of Ḥajjah sought to exploit, though doubtless the princes had no need of their help on the path to self-destruction. By 1954 Qāḍī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iryānī had been released from prison and he persuaded the Imām whose suite he had joined, to release others. Aḥmad al-Shāmī, when freed, joined the suite of Aḥmad's only son, Muḥammad al-Badr, and the literary and scholarly circle frequenting his salon at his mansion, Dār al-Bashā'ir in Bīr al-'Azab—others attending the salon included the blind left wing poet al-Baradūnī and 'Abdullāh Ḥumrān.[350]

The crucial issue within the Ḥamīd al-Dīn house was their dislike of Aḥmad's purpose that al-Badr be recognised as Heir-Apparent—broadly speaking the rest of the Ḥamīd al-Dīn favoured al-Ḥasan, the Imām's brother. Aḥmad in Ṣan'ā' in summer 1954 was quarrelling violently with his brothers over the question and, thinking they were planning to murder him, he suddenly left for Ta'izz, leaving al-Badr in Ṣan'ā'. Ḥasan declared his opposition to al-Badr becoming Heir-Apparent in print in *al-Iymān*. So Aḥmad packed off Ḥasan, whom he had dismissed from the Premiership on June 16 1956, as Yemeni ambassador to Washington and made his brother 'Abdullāh Prime Minister in Ta'izz.

By this time Aḥmad appears, by an unfortunate chance, to have already become a morphine addict. When suffering a painful operation an Italian doctor, Toffolon, persuaded him to accept injections, Toffolon reassuring him by injecting himself.[351] For this reason Aḥmad seemed to have lost his energy and will to action.

It so happened that men of the Army at the Ta'izz 'Urḍī at which Aḥmad resided, fell out with the villagers of al-Ḥawbān and the Army retaliated on the villagers, plundering, burning and killing. An officer, al-Thulāyā, said to have trained in Iraq along with al-Sallāl and al-'Amrī, took advantage of the Army's fear of punishment by the Imām, to persuade them to attack the 'Urḍī. This incident caught the various conspirators unprepared and divided but Prince 'Abdullāh was proclaimed Imām and Aḥmad declared himself ready to abdicate in favour of his brother—he actually wrote an instrument of abdication which is displayed to this day in the 'Urḍī Museum.

Aḥmad however was playing for time and summoned the garrisons and tribes of Jabal Ṣabir to his aid—in Ta'izz the Shāfi'ī *'āmil* rallied to him. Al-Badr was in Hodeidah, but he moved up to Ḥajjah to rally the tribes, at the same time releasing the remaining prisoners there of 1948, including Ḥasan al-'Amrī, al-Sallāl and Muḥammad al-Akwa' who joined him. Meanwhile the Imām broke out of the 'Urḍī sword in hand and challenged his besiegers to personal combat, adding 'Do you want to kill your Imām, the Commander of the Faithful? You can't do it! Your Imām is guarded by God!' Aḥmad had bribed a number of Thulāyā's soldiers to come over to his side. Later he is said to have fined the same soldiers for their mutinying the sum of the bribes he paid them—no wonder the men were filled with rueful admiration for him—Aḥmad, Yā Jinnāh—You devil!

8.3 Imām Aḥmad Ḥamīd al-Dīn attending an execution, surrounded by members of his family and attendants, with young princes in the foreground.

'Abdullāh and another brother 'Abbās, al-Thulāyā and twelve others, mostly officers, were executed. Qāḍī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iryānī, who was deeply implicated, was reprieved at the last moment. As a reward for his prompt action al-Badr was proclaimed Heir-Apparent and made Deputy Prime Minister and Commander in Chief. On April 25 1955 he was made Prime Minister.

In 1956 al-Badr made a lengthy tour abroad, meeting Nasser in Cairo and falling under his spell. He came to London and was well received but with reservations because of the frontier situation,[352] and he was given neither aid nor arms. In Russia and the Soviet block he found a readiness to supply him with (relatively) modern arms and military instructors. Al-Badr probably thought to provide himself with a trained modern army which would support him if Ḥasan were to return and raise the tribes, but he was playing a dangerous game.

In Cairo Nasser had been cossetting the Liberals who were issuing a stream of propaganda by pamphlet and on Ṣawt al-'Arab against Imām Aḥmad which had an undoubted effect within and without the Yemen. This Aḥmad countered by joining the United Arab Republic in 1958 and the Liberals had to transfer their activities to Beirut. At this point, perhaps even earlier, Egyptian officers were brought in to train the Yemeni army.[353]

By 1959 addiction to morphine had got such a hold on Aḥmad that he had to go to Italy to be 'dried out', taking with him al-Iryānī whose opinions he valued while he was aware that he was a dangerous man.

350 Al-Shamāḥī, 276.

351 Toffolon died, it is said, through his addiction.

352 Badr brought with him to London Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Shāmī (a Qāḍī house of Kawkabān not Sayyids) and when I chatted to him about the frontier troubles of the time of which he was believed to be in charge he blamed young British officers for it. He died in Ṣan'ā' in 1965.

353 Al-Shamāḥim 306, states that from 1959 al-Badr introduced large numbers of Egyptian officers.

Calamitous as the Heir-Apparent's actions were for the Ḥamīd al-Dīn, his policy did have some positive results in that he got the Russians to reconstruct Hodeidah port, the French to help at Mocha, and the Chinese to build the Hodeidah-Ṣan'ā' road—but even these long-term benefits were only to the advantage of the foes of the régime as they made the swift arrival of Nasser's armoured forces in Ṣan'ā' a possibility.